Angel Beats! -Track Zero- Chapter 1 – A Rocket for Two

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Angel Beats! -Track Zero-
A prequel novel of the TV animation series “Angel Beats!”.

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The original Japanese publication can be found here.

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Chapter 1 of 7 – “A Rocket for Two”

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Climbing atop to the roof's fence, I inspect my surroundings from the highest point of the school.

A field resides just bit away from the foot of this building. To its left, there's a building that houses an indoor tennis court, and a place that seems to be an auditorium.

What a ridiculous amount of space this school occupies.

The place I'm looking at though, is the world beyond the school's premise.

A forest spans on and on, and then ends in a thick mist, blocking anything beyond from view.

"What is with this place…? What happened to the world outside…?"

"Off, you, go!"

A girl's voice comes from behind.

Bam!

"AAaaaaaahhhhhhhhhhh!!"

~ ~ ~

"Haah…"

I wake up to find myself lying in bed.

In a room painted in white.

It's the infirmary.

There’s a girl standing beside me, with a headband on her head.

“Um…”

“I know what you are gonna say. Yup, it’s exactly what you’re thinking. No need to say it.”

“What the hell?! Hey! Weren’t you the asshole that kicked me off the building?! I almost died! Holy crap, I survived! From that high! It’s a freaking miracle!”

“Oh? Weren’t you trying to test if you can die or not?”

“Why the hell would I wanna test that?!”

“Humph, so you are dumber than I expected. I thought you’d have noticed it by now.”

With her hand holding her chin, she lets out a “hmm” sound from her nose, and then looks away in disgust.

“What are you talking about?”

“Don’t you two have class?”

A voice from across the headband girl. The school nurse, it seems.

“Ah, we’re going.”

The girl answers.

“Let’s talk somewhere else.”

And then, the school bell rings.

I follow her up to the roof again.

“So, what is it? What am I not noticing?”

“This is the afterlife.”

“Huh? I don’t understand.”

“You should still have memories of dying, and waking up here.”

“Hah…”

I died…?

Calling up the memories of my last moments. There was an accident.

A huge truck was coming.

I was dazed and couldn’t move, let alone dodge away.

An impact followed. The sky and ground alternated in my view quite a few times.

Then it all stopped. I was looking up at the sky, fully aware of how battered my body was. Every part of my body, hurting. My mumbled groans, repeating.

I was going to die… And with that thought, my consciousness drifted away.

When I woke up, I was lying on the ground in a school I didn’t recognize, and wearing a set of uniform I’d never seen before. I didn’t have a scratch on me.

Others in the same uniform were entering the school gates.

While in my state of confusion, a girl came over, introduced herself as the student council president, and took me by my hand. I followed her to into a classroom and she led me to my seat.

A teacher came in, and homeroom started.

Despite it being my first time there, my name was called.

“Absent?” I got asked.

“H-here.” I answered.

A couple of girls let out a laugh.

The teacher moved on to call other names.

I was counted as present just like that.

What kind of a system is this school using…

Someone suddenly showed up and there was already a seat assigned, and no one seemed the slightest bit surprised about it.

What the heck is going on in this place…

“Seems like you are getting it now. So, there’s only one thing left to do. Team up with me.”

“Um, no, I still don’t get any of this. I’m so confused. And who are you anyway?”

“Human.”

“Are you making fun of me?”

“Geez, use your head a little. Stop disappointing me. Gah, I can’t believe I have to put up with you from now on.”

“You sure speak whatever’s on your mind…”

“Yeah, now think harder.”

“Alright…”

The girl in front of me definitely looks human.

I’m a human too.

Hmm…?

“Um, there are some non-humans around…”?

“25 points.”

“I didn’t ask for a grade. Gimme an answer.”

“Like I said, stop disappointing me.”

She’s staring at me and getting me all flustered.

What’s with this girl… She’s kinda cute though…

People who aren’t human, hmm…

Indeed, everyone was behaving as if I’d always been here, which did seem kind of eerie.

“Eh? Could it be that… The students aren’t human?”

“80 points.”

“No way… Then what are they?”

“Can’t you reach full points by yourself first?”

“Uh… The teachers, they aren’t human either?”

“90 points.”

Good… Only 10 more.

“I got it! There are also monsters wandering around outside the school!”

“Ah, you’re dumb indeed! What a pity! Guess I’ll go look for someone else. Okay, bye.”

“Wait, wait, wait. I already got this far, so I’m not that dumb. C’mon, tell me.”

“Just give me the correct answer then. I already gave you a gigantic hint back there. If you still don’t get it, it’s bye bye for real.”

I wonder why… Despite getting teased this much, I still don’t want her to give up on me…

She does feel much more human than the others though.

Yeah, this is the first real human I’ve found in this world. I don’t want her to abandon me.

Besides, she also seems to know a lot about this world. She’s been testing to see if I’m qualified to know too.

I carefully rehash all of her words.

Perfect score… Here I come!

“Alright… You said you’re also looking for others, so there are other humans, those who have died, and then came to this world just like us.”

“99 points.”

I feel a bit defeated.

“There are more…?”

“What did I say in the start?”

“I can’t remember.”

“Remember.”

Churning my brains as fast as possible, and finally…

“This is the afterlife…”

“Yes. And who lives here?”

“Those who are dead like us… And…?”

“Oh geez, what a dumbass. Who do you think made this world of the dead possible?”

“Huh… You mean…”

“Yeah, that. Spit it out.”

“God.”

I give her my crazy hypothesis.

“…Finally, 100. You really are dumb.”

“Wait, wait, god really exists?! Where? Have you met the guy?”

“Calm down. I haven’t, but it wouldn’t make sense if god doesn’t exist. This is the afterlife, a world for us to sort out our thoughts, attain Nirvana, and reincarnate. Do you think a world like this would just spring into existence on its own? Who do you think that set this all up?”

“God…?”

“It might not be an existence as we think, but it must be something like that.”

“So where…? Maybe it’s so far beyond the skies that we can’t really see.”

“We’ll build a rocket then.”

“Don’t be ridiculous.”

“You must be brain-dead. The concept of time doesn’t exist here. Or, in other, easier to understand words, our time here is unlimited.”

“We’re still gonna grow old and die eventually.”

Whack!

“Ow! What?!”

She sure isn’t holding back.

“I had no words for your stupidity, so I had to hit you…”

“What the hell.”

“How can dead people grow old and die, you moron?!”

“Oh yeah… So, are we like immortals?”

Bam!

“Ow ow ow… Don’t kick me!”

“What else do you think I was trying to prove, when I put all that effort into kicking you off the roof, huh?!”

She pulls on my neck collar, with her face right up close, speaking with her spit flying at me…

“Ah, yeah… So we are…”

I doubt I’ll ever fall for this girl in my entire life…

Wait, my entire life ended already.

“If they aren’t human, what are they?”

“Props, things to make this place look just like an everyday-life school.”

“So they’ll ignore me if I talk to them?”

“No, you can talk to them. You can even become friends with them if you want. Amateurs like you would never notice the difference.”

“How do I notice the difference then?”

“Those who do strange stuff are human. Like you, when you were climbing the fence trying to jump. The rest are all them.”

“So that’s how you figured out I’m human… By the way, I wasn’t actually gonna jump.”

“Same thing. No one would go up there.”

“Um, so are we a team now?”

This important question pops up in my mind.

“I guess, though I had my doubts back there.”

She says begrudgingly.

“What’s your name? I’m Hinata.”

“Yuri.”

“Ehhh?!”

“What?”

“That’s my mom’s name.”

“So?”

“It’d be like calling my mom by her first name. I’d feel weird. Do you have a nickname?”

“I’ve always been just Yuri.”

“Then… Yurippe.”

“…?! You have horrible tastes.”

“It sounds cute, Yurippe. You can call me Hinacchi. I want you to call me Hinacchi.”

“Like hell I will…”

I take a deep breath and stretch for a bit.

“Alright, so you were saying about doing something before?”

I twist my upper body left and right to get my body flexed up.

“Yeah. You are gonna help.”

“With what?”

“Isn’t it obvious? Lure god out.”

“Really…”

Apparently my brain has adjusted enough already, so I’m not too surprised to hear her say that.

“How?”

“Kill everyone in this school. I bet that’d make god come out in a rush.”

“You are going to hell…”

“Ha! If there were one, this would be it. Seeing as how we’re all exiled here, with painful memories of our past still intact.”

With her arms crossed, she gazes up into the sky.

“Memories of our past life, huh…”

Revolting memories mine are.

Yurippe mentioned it before.

This is the place to sort out our thoughts, the place connecting us to our next lives.

With a life like mine… Can I ever get them all sorted out…

Ah, so that's why our time here is limitless.

How considerate.

In that case… This might really be hell.

"Let's leave the luring method aside… What are you gonna do when god does show up?"

"Isn't it obvious? A fist to the face for making us live such miserable lives. No, a whole beating."

"The girl that beat up god… That'd be something… Never seen one before…"

"Right? That's gotta be a first in history."

"Yeah, no doubt. They'll write it into the history books for sure."

"Alright then, you start with the 3rd years, and I'll start with the 1st years."

She's going ahead with this.

"Hey, wait, wait!"

"What?"

She turns around.

"Isn't there something else we could do? I mean, don't you think it's a bit unrealistic for the two of us to kill a whole school of people?

"This world has no cops. Just get a bat from baseball club. Now off you go."

"I said wait!"

"What? You're getting annoying… Are you scared? They aren't human, you know."

"Not that. What I'm trying to say is, don't you think there are too many of them? A whole school! That's like what, a couple of hundred, no, probably more a thousand people!"

"We've got unlimited time."

“Okay, let me say it this way then. I don’t want to behave like a homicidal maniac.”

Her expression changes a bit.

“Homicidal maniac… I see… I was thinking of such a thing…”

“Yeah. Let’s do it in a more humane way, alright?”

“Yeah…”

I can’t believe her mind can be swayed so easily, despite her imposing attitude.

“Got a plan?”

“You’re asking me…?”

“You rejected it, so now you gotta think of a new one. Something still as shocking as killing everyone in the whole school, enough to lure out god.”

“Yeah, that is quite shocking…”

But I still gotta think of something. Hmm… I cross my arms and go deep in thought.

“How about, we come at night and smash all the windows?”

“Are you serious? We can’t just commit a common vandalism. Gimme something that’s on par with killing a whole school of people.”

“How can there be anything else on par with that?!”

“Sigh… Why did I even team up with you…?”

Yurippe sighs like she’s truly having regrets.

“You’re asking for too much. Don’t mark me off as ‘useless’ just for that.”

“What can you do?”

“Well…”

I raise my hand and clench it into a fist.

“I’m pretty confident about my reflexes. And pretty strong too. I’m a guy after all. When the time comes, I can protect you even at the cost of my life.”

“I don’t die though.”

“Ah! I forgot about that!”

I hold my head in frustration.

“Wow, flirting already? I didn’t know you were such a skirt-chaser, Hinata.”

“Nah. I’d die before even thinking about flirting with you, so don’t worry.”

“Aren’t you already dead?”

“Ah! I forgot about that too!”

I start to hold my head again.

“You really are dumb.”

“What’s going on here?”

A voice comes from behind.

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“Tsk. Here comes one of them.”

Yurippe clicks her tongue.

I turn around to find a familiar figure in front of me… It’s the student council president.

“Classes are still in session.”

“Then why are you here?”

“I have the teacher’s permission. Now go back to your class.”

No need to ask, she’s probably not human either. She feels even less human than the other students, like a robot. And since she is the student council president, she must be one of the main features that are here to create an illusion of a normal school.

Yurippe comes close and whispers into my ear.

“Hinata, that’s the student council prez. Let’s see you do something.”

“Huh?”

“You know. The head of the student council. The one closest to god. Now is your chance.”

“Uh, yeah but… What am I supposed to do?”

“I’ll help you think of something if you’ll actually do it.”

“No, I think I’ll pass…”

She won’t come up with anything other than bloodshed anyway.

“Then think for yourself.”

“Alright. I’ll ask her a bunch of questions first. How’s that?”

“What’s the point of that?”

Ignoring her complaints, I walk up to the silently watching prez.

“Say, Miss Student Council Prez.”

“Yes?”

“Do you think god exist?”

“Do you think this the time to ask that?”

“Yup, it’s really important. I won’t go back to class if you don’t answer.”

“Then, I don’t know.”

…So that’s how you’re gonna play.

“Okay, but let’s say god does exist, where do you think it’d be?”

“Can’t think of a place.”

…Again. We can’t really hold a conversation if all she says is don’t-knows.

Well then, let’s try something more private.

Come to think of it, maybe these guys can love too.

A question pops up in my head.

“Do you have someone you like?”

“…?”

She seems confused.

“Do you have a boy you like?”

I ask again.

“I have not.”

This time she answers right away without changing her expression.

“So, what would you do, if I were to confess to you right now?”

“I don’t know.”

Let’s try it out then. I can’t wait to see her reaction.

“You are such a cutie, Prez. I’m serious. I’ve been thinking about you from the first moment I saw you. This must be what they call ‘love at first sight’, right? Say, prez, um, do you wanna go-”

Bam!

I’m spinning in midair. What?! Why?!

The last thing I see is the follow-through of Yurippe’s perfect kick.

~ ~ ~

“Haah…”

I wake up to find myself lying in bed.

It’s the infirmary.

Yurippe is looking down at me coldly.

“Did you come to this world just to hit on girls?”

I spring up.

“You asshole! How many times are you gonna kick me off the damn roof?! I might get killed! Good thing I survived! Wow, another miracle!”

“Ah ha ha, I told you no one dies here.”

Yurippe laughs with her hand flinging about.

“That doesn’t mean you should do it all the freaking time!”

“You partnered up with me, yet all you think about is your selfish desires, so it’s really your own fault.”

“I obviously wasn’t serious! I just wanted to know if those guys can love.”

“Oh ho. I didn’t know you were such a romantic, Hinata.”

“I’m no romantic, you just don’t feel any romance at all.”

“Huh? Who need romance in this world? How are we supposed to love, when we’re filled with these gloomy memories?”

I feel kind of sad hearing that from her.

That’s more the reason, is it not…?

“I don’t think it’d be so bad… You’re a bit too impatient. Don’t you get tired of rushing things all the time? Our time is unlimited, right? So why not try to fall in love, and take things slowly?”

“Argh, this guy’s hitting on me again…”

“I’m not… I’m just worried about you…”

She is foregoing even the tiniest bit of happiness, and just charging full speed ahead.

“So, we’ll be partners from now on.”

“I’m fine by myself, you know.”

“Don’t say that…”

“You’re useless anyway.”

“Don’t be so stingy.”

“And it’d be a pain if you really do fall for me.”

“Won’t happen, don’t worry.”

“What if I fall for you?”

“Huh…?”

Words I’d never imagine her say…

I freeze. My eyes are glued to Yurippe’s bewitching lips.

“Then…”

“Yeah right! Like hell I will! Ah ha ha! You are such a retard!”

…This is why I worry about you, Yurippe.

I divert my eyes toward the clock ticking on the wall.

Evening already, huh? My stomach lets out a growl.

“Dead people get hungry too…?”

“We still have all of our senses and needs, so we’ll still feel sleepy and hungry.”

Yurippe looks at me suspiciously.

“What…?”

“You’ve got another need too, don’t you? Seeing how you’ve been so far, this is definitely gonna be a problem.”

“Don’t worry. I’d never ask of it from you.”

“Oh, the prez then.”

“Nope.”

“No? Are you gonna be alright like that?”

“Who’s the one that said we don’t need romance?”

“I really don’t. I just don’t wanna see a guy suffering so much under his own desires… I was gonna help you out if you had a thing for me. But guess not. Oh well.”

…!

Should I really consider her as a girl…?

I gaze upon her face.

Eh?!

Where did that pretty face go?!

Odd. She's supposed to be of a looker too.

But now, this face staring back at me, it can only be described as the smirking face of a Certain Evil.

Why do I feel this shiver going up my spine?

What is this?

My eyes go dark for a sec, and I suddenly get this flashback.

"Ahhhhh!"

"What? Did the memory of your death just pop up? You poor boy…"

"No, I just remembered getting kicked off the roof by you!"

Yurippe just cackles.

Geez… I'll probably never get bored with her around.

Not a bad companion to have for the afterlife.

Growl.

Once I've calmed down, my stomach starts to act up again.

"When did you last eat?"

"I haven't had anything since I got here. Didn't have the time to think about that, really."

"You gotta improve your adaptability. It's very important."

“I’m adapting. By the way, where do we get food, and what do we eat at this place?”

“You can order stuff at the school cafeteria.”

“That’s good to hear.”

I reach out for my wallet, but there’s nothing in my pockets.

But of course. I don’t even know how or when I got into these clothes.

“Food here isn’t free, is it?”

“Of course not. You gotta pay.”

Yurippe crosses her arms and looks at me like I’m stupid.

“Are you are thinking of something dangerous again…?”

“Relax. You get bursaries for food and stuff. Just pick it up from the office.”

“Oh, I see.”

But the thought of it being already prepared irks me a bit.

Just like that seat I got, everything’s been set up for the newly deceased.

“Getting it is too much hassle, so I’ll lend you some this time.”

“Ah, thanks a bunch.”

~ ~ ~

A bowl of ramen and another bow of pork rice down the stomach.

“Wow, this is amazing… It’s just like when I was still alive!”

The taste, the texture, the satisfied feeling in my stomach, nothing has changed.

“What’s amazing is that you actually finished both of those.”

I put down the empty bowl, and lean back on my chair.

“Haah… That felt damn good.”

This is what heaven’s supposed to be like.

“Do you want to disappear?”

Yurippe stops eating her udon and turns toward me.

“Huh? Why?”

“Once you become satisfied in this world, you’ll attain Nirvana. Like I said, this is the place to sort out your thoughts. You’ll disappear right away after you’ve gotten rid of all your lingering regrets.”

“By just filling my stomach?”

“If that’s enough to drive away the pains of your life, then sure.”

“Crap… I got satisfied without thinking…”

“I thought you were trying to get heartburn just to cancel it out.”

“I wasn’t thinking that far ahead.”

“Yeah. You are a retard after all.”

“Yeah, yeah, I’m a retard. You gotta tell me these things beforehand.”

“Can’t you learn from experience? I sure did. If I have to explain everything, we’d talk till sundown.”

“Let’s hope I’ll still be here by sunrise tomorrow.”

“I really don’t care either way.”

“I do! I’m gonna have to study your every move from now on.”

“Hmm? So you do have a thing for me?”

“Don’t misunderstand. That’ll never happen.”

“Yeah, that’d be so disgusting. I’m trying to eat here.”

Yurippe replies harshly.

“Aren’t we a team? Aren’t we going to lure out god together?”

“You’re pretty smart for a retard.”

Satisfied, Yurippe returns to her udon.

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By the time we leave, it’s already dark outside.

“What’s the plan now?”

“Nothing for today. Go do whatever you want?”

“Where do I sleep?”

“There’s a dorm over there.”

I bet my room’s gonna be ready when I arrive.

I start walking with Yurippe.

“I wonder if I’ll get a roommate.”

“I bet you will. There aren’t any one person rooms. I kicked mine out though, so now I live alone.”

“I knew you’d do something like that.”

“What? Don’t you think it’s creepy, sleeping in a room with something that’s not human?”

“You are more of a threat to them than they are to you.”

“That’s the guys’ dorm.”

She stops and points to the left.

A large building stands there. A size fitting for a boarding school.

“Okay. Guess I’ll see you tomorrow. Though I don’t know what’s gonna happen next…”

“Leave that thought till tomorrow. Goodnight.”

She takes her leave.

Alone now, I take a deep sigh.

What an utterly exhausting day.

I fell off the roof twice… Today sure has been disastrous…

And I still have this non-human roommate to meet.

The one I have to live with from now on…

This stinks so much…

Being with Yurippe is way more comforting, even though her words are filled with thorns. After all, she is the only human I know in this world.

I’m already in love with human’s warmth.

~ ~ ~

I walk along the hallway, scanning the name tags on the doors.

Finally, one with my name on it.

So this is my room…

I stop in front of it.

My roommate’s name is… Ooyama.

Alight, let's head in.

After a few knocks, I push the door open.

"Hi there. My name is Hinata. I'll be your roommate from now on."

I introduce myself.

"Hello, I'm Ooyama. Nice to meet you."

A male student is sitting arch-backed inside, on the bottom level of a double-deck bed.

He appears quite normal. Not too buff, too feeble, too fat, too skinny, too good looking, or too ugly. From my first impression, the only thing special about this guy is that there's absolutely nothing special about this guy.

His greeting is completely lacking in personality too.

It's like he's an RPG NPC, one of those random villagers they have in the starting villages.

His line would be something like "Hello, this is Some-Some Village. Enjoy your stay."

It's so by the books that it irks me.

Maybe they are all like this… Thank goodness I have Yurippe around.

I come in and shut the door.

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“There’s a table there for you, and your bed is the one up top.”

“Oh, thank you.”

I pull out a chair by the desk and sit down.

Then I turn around to face this Ooyama person.

Let’s see if I can get a conversation going.

“So Mr. Ooyama, have you been here long?”

“As you can see, I’m a 3rd year just like you.”

“Oh… I see…”

Guess I’m supposed to be a 3rd year…

Let’s try something else.

“Do you have any hobbies?”

“Reading and listening to music, I suppose.”

Can’t get any duller answers than that…

“What kind of music do you listen to?”

“J-pop.”

And it keeps going!

“What about you? What do you like, Mr. Hinata?”

He asks back.

“Me? Uh, sports…”

“Do you just watch or do you play too?”

“I do both.”

“Ah. I like to watch, but I’m not really very athletic. Ha ha ha.”

Yuck, what a fake laugh.

I feel disgusted.

Ahh, how I yearn for those thorny, and yet humanly words of Yurippe…

Someone scold me please…

“Ah, no need to be so formal. Just call me Ooyama.”

“Can I call you Yamapii?”

“What?”

“Erm, I figured I’d call you something with a bit more personality.”

“Ha ha ha, people always tell me that I lack personality. Even the teachers sometimes get mad at me for it.”

“Ah heh, I’m just kidding. Oh, and you can just call me Hinata too.”

“Alright then, Mr. Hinata.”

Guess there’s a bug in this villager’s programming.

“So what are your plans for the night?”

“What are my choices?”

“Either do homework, bathe, then sleep, or bathe, do homework, then sleep.”

“Either one’s fine…”

“Then, let’s go take a bath first. It should still be empty.”

“Wait, I’m going with you?”

“Hmm? You don’t want to?”

“Nah, I guess we can…”

What a friendly villager.

Since we are going to live together from now on, I can't avoid him all the time, so I might as well go along with it…

"Okay, let's go."

Ooyama gives me a happy nod and we start to prepare.

"Here's a brand new towel for you."

"Ah… Thank you."

~ ~ ~

Next day, on the roof.

Upon seeing Yurippe, I immediate dash toward her.

"Yurippeeeee!"

I'm so excited to see another human being, my tears are coming out.

I need to have her in my arms so I can confirm her warmth for my refuge.

But Yurippe nimbly dodges aside.

Wham!

My face plants onto the fence.

"Oh boy… This guy's 3rd desire just erupted… My body's in danger… Sorry, let's disband. Okay, bye."

"Noooooo!"

"What do you want, sicko?"

"I just want you, so much!"

“Holy crap! See? You’re beyond saving!”

“Not as a woman! As a human being! My roommate was so fake and creepy, that’s why I want to see another human so much!”

“Oh. That does suck. Why don’t you kick him out like I did?”

“I don’t think they have that programmed in… I’m scared of what might happen if I do…”

“Right now you’re the scariest one here.”

“Ah, anyway, sorry. I apologize. I’m calm now…”

“You better not fling yourself at me when we meet later. Because if you do, I’ll kick you off from here again.”

“Yeah…”

I’d enjoy even that at this point.

“So, what are we gonna do today?”

“We’re gonna try to lure god out, of course.”

“How?”

“Huh…? You had all night and you didn’t come up with anything?”

“You never told me to come up with anything…”

“Argh! How can you be so dense! Geez! Where’s your brain?! Why did I even partner up with you?!”

“Ha ha… Yeah, sheesh… Ha ha ha.”

Kinda creepy to find myself enjoy being yelled at, but right now, even her flying spit seems lovely to me.

“Then start thinking, right here, right now! Immediately! Say something!”

“Give me some time…”

Just then, a chime starts to play on the PA system.

A panicky voice comes on.

“To all students. Please return to your classroom immediately and wait for your homeroom teacher. I repeat…”

“…?!”

Yurippe quickly scans around.

“What?”

“Something special happened. We never had that kind of announcement before.”

“Maybe a biker gang came into the school?”

“Maybe. Whatever it is, this is our chance.”

“Our chance for what?”

“You really are retarded. Something that shouldn’t have happen has happened! We gotta use it to our advantage, so we can…”

“Lure god out?”

“Let’s go. We gotta find out what’s going on.”

We are running through hallways. Our first goal is the faculty room.

And then.

Bang!

A rather out of place sound resonates in the air.

“Hold on…”

I’ve heard of this sound countless times in TV shows and movies.

“Wasn’t that a gunshot? This is getting kinda dangerous.”

“No freaking way…”

She begins to waver. Her eyes open wide, and she has stopped running too. This is my first time seeing her like this.

“Something that shouldn’t exist in this world has appeared…”

“The gun, you mean?”

“Someone brought it into this world. That’s what we need on our team!”

“And by ‘that’, you don’t mean the gun, you mean the guy that brought it?”

“Yeah. The guy’s definitely gonna be a valuable companion to have.”

She’s back to her usual self now; even has a smile on her face.

“You mean the maniac that just open-fired in the school?! Are you nuts?!”

“How else are we gonna flip this world upside down?”

Yurippe turns around and dashes toward the gunshot.

To be continued in chapter 2. [Unlikely will I translate it though. Hopefully this will spur enough interest for others to continue. We aren't going to sub the anime. Have yourself a not so disappointing April 1st.]

If you'd like to beautify the words or report mistakes, use the comment box below. For longer reports, use pastebin.com or other pasting sites. If you're going to post the whole article elsewhere, please credit the Chinese translators too, as per their request.

A big thanks goes out to Double T… Naruleach for doing the editing. Some excerpts from Angel Beats!' 4koma manga, reproduced from SumiSora's Chinese scanlation.

麻枝准×ごとPが贈る
『Angel Beats!』前日譚
大人気連載第2回！

Angel Beats! エンジェルビーツ
-Track:ZERO-

第2話
Navy Blue

神への復讐をもくろむ「死んだ世界戦線」は、どのようにして生まれたのか？　アニメ版主人公の音無の親友・日向とゆりを中心に、物語が少しずつ動き出していく。脚本家・麻枝准みずから書き下ろす前日譚第2回。

Word:麻枝准（Key）
Illustration:ごとP
Character Design:Na-Ga（Key）

第1話　あらすじ

神が空のかなたにいるのなら、ロケットを作ってでも追い詰める――死後の世界に迷い込んだ少年・日向を待っていたものは、激情を秘めた快活な少女・ゆりとの出会いだった。神に復讐すると息巻くゆりに危うさを感じた日向は、彼女と行動をともにすることを決意する。そんな矢先、校内に銃声が響き渡り……。

Angel Beats Track Zero Chapter 2: Navy Blue

Version 1.1, April 29, 2010

Notes from the translator

Hi all, please email corrections and other comments to irreduciblerepresentation (at gmail). I didn't do much editing, so feel free to suggest better grammar, etc. if you care.

The Chinese translation I translated from is in the zip file in mediafire.com/angelbeatstrackzero,
as will be the most updated version of this file.

I made a tiny bit of effort to follow the choices that were made for chapter 1 of track zero done by this guy:
http://subsmith.wordpress.com/2010/04/01/angel-beats-track-zero-chapter-1-a-rocket-for-two/

If there are horrible inconsistencies, etc. please let me know.

If anybody has JP raws or images for chapter 2-5, please let me know as well so I can upload them.

I'll upload a zip from nyaatorrents with JP raws for chapter 6 in this mediafire.

#2: Navy Blue

As I raced to catch up with Yurippe, I saw a group of teachers in front of her.

"Principal's office"

Rushing into the crowd of teachers, Yurippe forced herself through.

"Hey, didn't you hear the announcement? Students need to go back to class!"

A teacher grabbed her by her arm.

"Oh... was there really that announcement... !!"

Pow! Suddenly, the teacher took a blow from Yurippe's iron elbow and could only double over.

Isn't this far too lawless?

One by one, the teachers who tried to hold down Yurippe were knocked away and scattered.

Now, she was at the door.

"I'm going to bust in."

"But you haven't thought this through!?"

Without hesitation, she threw the doors open and charged inside.

Right now, all I could do was summon my courage and continue. Bracing myself, I followed her in.

A male student stood in the principal's office, he had a grandfatherly man in a suit who looked to be the principal in a headlock.

He held a gun in his hand.

Apparently it was for the principal's resistance [tl note1]. Furthermore, the barrel was now pointed at Yurippe.

"I said it before, if you come closer, I'll fire. Are you guys stupid or something ...?"

"Oh my~~"

"Look, this is trouble."

She was like a beautiful moth drawn to a flame.

But in this world, moths can't burn to death from the fire.

Yurippe spoke without a hint of nervousness: "I know what you want to say. Yes, just as you're thinking, I don't even need to spell it out. Come, let's team up."

"Your lines sure are unexpected."

"Team up? What a joke. In this world, how can I trust anything but myself?"

"Believe me, I can become a powerful ally."

"Hah... interesting. Then, strip for me."

"Ffff, ha!?"

I looked at Yurippe.

"I say, you'd better not let me down. Drop those third-rate soap opera side character lines already. You've just performed a world-changing feat. This is really amazing. You should do yourself a favor and not demean yourself with such words."

As expected of Yurippe. Anybody would wring their hands after hearing this.

"I can't understand a word you're saying. If you want me to trust you, just take off all your clothes. This is all I'm going to say."

The receiving side is strong too!!!

However, the Yurippe I know would never stop spitting out ego-destroying phrases, until thoroughly overwhelming the other side.

"This guy will strip as my substitute."

"Why me, hey!!"

No choice for me but to butt in.

"Any complaints?"
"Yes, many! On what basis do I have to strip in such a situation?"

"Why did you think I let you be my partner?"

"Well, certainly not for stripping!"

"Why you... have to push such a small thing back for me to do? Haven't you got any honor as a man?"

"I'm not making you do it! It would be OK if neither of us stripped!"

"But he said that he won't trust us unless we strip."

"Not "us", he was talking to you."

"I don't want to strip though."

"Thinking of a plan is your job."

"Me again? What kind of a character are you? When will you come in handy? I'm about to fire you"

Bang!

..... a gunshot.

A brand new tiny hole appeared on the wall next to us.

"Not good.... Now's not the time for idle chatter...."

"What do you mean idle chatter, do you take us for morons? I'm currently taking responsibility for you."

"No no, now's not the time to discuss this...."

"If you don't get out now, the next one will go in your heads!"

The man's sharp voice.

"Jeez, a trick question now~"

Yurippe apparently finally remembered her original point.

She addressed the man again.

"Uh, what did you just say? If I strip you'll trust me? Then can we do this in private? I don't want this guy to see me."

"I'm not listening to your bullshit anymore, get the fuck out!"

"Oh really. Well, negotiations have broken down despite all the concessions I made. All right then, kill him, Hinata."

"Huh, me!? What can I do in this situation!"

"My word, what are you doing standing around here!? Shut up and tackle him!"

To be honest, I'm not sure exactly what happened next.

Yes, I don't know. First, the door suddenly opened.

Next, the gun rang out several times. Embarrassingly, I shut my eyes out of fear.

Din-dan-din-dan, the sound of bullet casings hitting the floor.

But the gun was still firing.

Puu-chii, a dangerous sound of something being pierced.

It was instantly silent. Opening my eyes, the man lay on the ground.

The student council president stood over him.

Some kind of giant blade stuck out of the man's belly.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The man fired towards the student council president's body again.

Fresh blood poured from his wound.

However, the blade continued to pin the man's body firmly....

Until the man lost all his strength, she continued to hold that pose.

When the gun quieted down, the teachers rushed in. Yurippe and I watched vacantly as the principal was rescued and the man was carried out.....

We hadn't done a thing.
~ ~ ~

For dinner I decided to have curry rice.

Spoonful by spoonful, I put it in my mouth.

Yurippe ordered udon as she had yesterday, but she hadn't touched her chopsticks at all.

When I finished the curry rice, for lack of anything better to do, I started: "Sure was a tiring day... though for me, it beats being knocked off the roof twice by a lot."

I thought I'd hear her angry retort, but Yurippe just wordlessly started to eat her udon.

..... This is not right.

Was not recruiting that guy a similarly rough blow to her?

We stared at each other's empty plates and bowls.

"Cheer up a bit, that guy's not dead, there'll be another chance to recruit him, right?"

".... Cut the crap."

Finally, I heard her speak.

"You couldn't be thinking that I'm still worrying about that guy?"

"Eh? It wasn't because you weren't able to get him to join (your harem)?"

"You're an idiot...."

"What do you mean?"

"Didn't you see the student council president's movements?"

"I saw."

"And you thought nothing of it?"

"Um... I was a little surprised, I didn't think she was capable of doing that kind of thing."

"Geez..."

"What?"

"If there wasn't a table between us, I would surely beat you flying or kick you to death." She had apparently now returned to her normal self.

"Well then, as you like, go right ahead."

I stood up and stuck out my head.

She grabbed a pair of chopsticks and stabbed upwards!

I very narrowly dodged.

"What are you trying to do!"

"Poke out your eyes."

"I'll go blind!"

"It'd get better after three days anyways."

"And I wouldn't be able to see anything for that time, how could I help you then?"

"Even if you can see, all you do is complain, so it makes no difference either way."

"My life would be really difficult! If I suddenly went blind, my roommate would be really surprised!"

"I really look forward to seeing his reaction."

"You really are a..."

I sat down roughly, but hearing her usual nasty words somewhat relieved me.

"Back on topic, what was wrong with what the student council president did?"

"Didn't you think it was abnormal?"

"Weren't that guy's actions just as abnormal?"

"I'm talking about something way beyond that, what kind of a toy was that deadly weapon? Have you ever seen anything like that in your entire life?"

"That kind of a big blade? Yeah, just where did she pull that out from?"

"Pull it out? Nothing like that happened."

"Why?"

"You don't even have such basic observation skills? Looks like even if you were blind you wouldn't miss anything. Want me to poke out your eyes?"

"C'mon... OK, stop teasing me and just say it."

".... that large blade, she wasn't holding it in her hand."

"What do you mean?"

"It grew out of her arm."

"How's that possible!?"

"It just is."

It grew...?

What kind of thing is that, how could it grow out of someone's body?

"Do you understand? Compared to that guy, the student council president is way more abnormal!"

"If what you say is true, then that is really strange...."

Looks like Yurippe wasn't feeling down from failing to add that guy into her ranks, but rather was continuously thinking about this anomaly of the student council president.

"Then, you want to recruit the student council president?"

"That's not possible, because she just might be God."

"Is that really a possibility...."

"Listen up, this may be the afterlife, but other than not dying when we're killed, nothing seems to be different from when we were alive. Aside from not being able to run 100 meters in five seconds, one also can't defy gravity and fly after jumping off a roof - you

should be quite aware of these facts."
"That was you kicking me off the roof....."

"Anyways, the student council president's blade is definitely not right. Growing a blade out of your arm is a completely supernatural phenomenon. Nobody in this world possesses that kind of power."

"So you're saying that only she has a special existence...."

"If this is really the truth, then that guy's actions at least succeeded in forcing her to reveal herself."

"Is that so... then, the student council president, you couldn't be thinking of ....."

"Yeah. If she really is God, I will kill her. Though, there still isn't solid evidence."

"So.... how can we confirm this?"

"Exactly, I'll give you one day to think about this."

"Huh? You want me to think of a plan?!?"

"Don't make me repeat myself again and again, Hinata, is there anything else you are able to do?"

"B-But aren't I always by your side?"

"What? You couldn't have fallen for me?"

"No, that's not it."

"Ahh, you actually can tell a lie with such a straight face....."

"I just didn't want your life here to be so lonely, I was worried for you."

"That kind of concern is unnecessary, I don't care if I'm alone."

"Just take my following you as my own initiative."

"That's no good, since we're together, let me think of you as a necessity, not as a burden."

Hm, that makes sense....

I shrugged my shoulders and sighed as I thought.

"OK, fine. I'll spend tonight cooking up a plan to whether she's god."
I had no choice but to respond this way.

"That's how it should be, I like straightforward people,"

Yurippe said as she picked up her plate and stood up. And so we parted.

~ ~ ~

I lay on my bed thinking quietly.

"What's up? Is there something bothering you?"

"Ahh!"

A sudden sound by my side made me jump up. Ooyama had climbed up the ladder, and was looking at my face.

"Why do you ask so suddenly?"

"I heard you sighing up there, I was a bit worried about you."

I had not noticed myself making sounds at all, man, I guess I really was completely absorbed in my thinking about the problem of how to make God reveal herself.

"If you don't mind, talk it over with me."

Ooyama said this with a relaxed expression, like he would never have a care in the world.

"If when I came back, my eyes were poked out by chopsticks, what would you think?"

"Huh? That would be really scary."

"I think so too."

"What's going on !? Who's going to poke out your eyes!?"

"Nothing, it's just an unfunny joke."

"This is no joke!? Using chopsticks to poke out a person's eyes or whatever, that person is really dangerous!? Are you friends with such a dangerous person!?"

"Someday I'll introduce you."

"No way, no way!! Honestly, if you have that kind of friend, no wonder you're upset. It's best to break off relations with that person immediately."

"I've already decided to stay with that person forever."

"I can hardly believe you've survived to this day!! Everyday you'd have to be constantly on edge.... Though, in this room, please be at ease. I would never poke out your eyes."
"Sure, you're a pretty cool guy."

"You really flatter me!! I'm just a normal person, a completely normal person."

You guys are too normal.

Though joking around was fun (I've already learned by heart this method of passing the time)

However, after lights out, I kept on thinking.

Kept on sighing and groaning.

Because Ooyama that bastard suddenly stuck his face out, I gave him a punch to chase him off.

A peaceful contemplation.

Finally, at the moment my brain was about to explode, I finally thought of a plan so simple it had me dumbstruck.

"So say it."

The next morning, on the roof top. With the wind in her hair, Yurippe faced me with her hands on her hips.

"Yeah, it's a truly feasible and ... great plan!"

"Don't ham it up, hurry up and tell me."

Ooh, Yurippe's impatient! This is a perfect role reversal.

"Haha, I stayed up all night coming up with this ... there's no way I'd tell you so easi..."

Bam!

".... My plan is, take the principal hostage and barricade ourselves in his office."

"Oh, so you're saying reenact yesterday's events?"

"Right, that guy was by himself, so he was a goner after he got stabbed. But there's two of us, we can team up and fight, and furthermore, at the moment she unleashes that supernatural phenomenon, we can grab her and interrogate her. Her strategy of saying "I don't know" to everything definitely won't work this time."

"This is the first time I've felt that you're like a partner of mine."

Yurippe was extremely happy.

"That's quite an honor."

"How will we get weapons?"

"Steal the gun from yesterday."

"That gun is probably out of ammo."

"It'll be enough to threaten with."

"You rascal, you're so clever I'm actually a little unsettled, and a bit afraid of you. OK, shall we disband then?"

"Can't give me two words of honest praise, can you....."

~ ~ ~

The gun was stored in a safe in the teacher's lounge.

Yurippe and I snuck into the lounge at night, spent two days finding the key, and then quickly stole the gun.

Tomorrow we'd carry out the plan.

I lay in bed, staring at the gun in my hand.

This was of course my first time holding a real gun.

"AHHHHHHH, Hinata, what's that!?"

That pigheaded Ooyama had caught me.

"Gee, could you please say hi or something before you climb up here?"

He was so frightened by the gun that he hadn't heard a word I said.

"This is for... if my eyes get poked out by chopsticks, this is how I'll strike back."

"That joke isn't funny either!!!"

"No worries, the other party gets dry humor."

"Your friend sure is tolerant!! To be honest, with all the poking out of eyes with chopsticks and returning fire with a gun, you two must have a really messed up friendship!?"

"Wanna join us?"

"No way, no way, no way! Please excuse me! Sorry, but if you talk to me outside, please let me ignore you!"

Things just got interesting.

What will happen tomorrow? Will it really happen? I became excited and was not able to fall asleep the entire night.

~ ~ ~

The hour of the battle had arrived.

Yurippe held the gun, I held a metal bat, and we stood outside the door of the principal's office.

It was class time, and not even a shadow was to be seen in the hallway.

"Afraid?"

"It's too late now anyways."

"If that's the case, be a man and lift up your head."

"Do I look that frightened?"

Hey hey, an evil smile appeared on Yurippe's face.

"Then, let's go"

"OK"

Bam! I kicked open the door.

"Go go go!"

Following behind Yurippe, I rushed inside.

Yurippe rapidly circled behind the principal, put him in a headlock and placed the gun at his temple.

"Ah!! Not again!"

"That's right, again! Sorry. Would you mind using the internal line to tell the other staff the situation?"

"What're your demands this time?"

"Bring God out."

"God? How mysterious."

"OK, gramps, go right ahead."

I made a threatening move with my metal bat.

".... Understood."

The principal's reaction was reluctant.

After a while, noises came from the hallway.

"Hurry and bring out God, or else the principal's a goner!"

I stood by the door and yelled.

From outside, the sounds of what nonsense, that guy's crazy, etc.

This kind of response wasn't strange to me.

However, if you ask me, what's crazy is this world.

"What's your real objective here.....",

the annoyed principal muttered.

"To force God out into the open."

"Are you for real? This is too unfathomable.... Why am I always meeting this kind of ....."

"Always? This isn't just the second time?",

Yurippe stared and asked.

"Right...."

"Then how many times has this happened?"

"I can't remember....."

"Then other than us, and the guy two days ago, other people have done this sort of thing before....."

"Well yes.... so, it's not strange.... ah, here she comes...."

I turned my head, and the student council president had appeared out of the blue right behind me.

I dodged a blast of cold wind from my back, and instinctively lifted up my bat.

Clang!

The bat was knocked from my hands.

A flickering and faintly glowing blade was pointing at me.

That blade was sticking out from the sleeves of the student council president .

What is that thing....

"Stop! Can't you see that we've got the principal hostage? If you hurt my partner, I'll kill him."

"Then, I'll start with you."

"....."

She still didn't stop.

"What is this power of yours? You're different from the normal students -- who the hell are you!?"

Yurippe's tactic of questioning had no effect, and the student council president wordlessly stepped closer and closer.

"I'm going to fire!"

Yurippe's face bore no hint of anxiety, but that gun had no bullets.

I also had no idea what to do.

Should I continue to strike at the student council president with my bat?

But.... the enemy was just a girl....

However if I don't do this, Yurippe will be in danger....

In order to avoid repeating the fate of the male student, we had to cooperate. This was the strategy I had come up with.

..... well, after all nobody in this world could die,

"Stop right there----!!"

With all my strength, I rushed over and brought down my bat.

But, I didn't feel the strike connect.

"Failure!?"

I definitely aimed directly ahead, exactly where she should have been standing.
Bang, there was a sound of something hitting the floor.

".... eh?"

Something rolled past my feet.

It was the bat.

I trembled with fear as I looked at the bat I was gripping tightly, all that remained was half of a bat with a smooth horizontal cut across it.

"What the hell is your power!? Answer me!!"

Yurippe's nervous voice.

The student council president was facing her and continued to approach.

"Damn."

I threw away the bat and rushed her from behind. I hoped to grab both of her arms,
However, I was knocked into the wall.

Incredibly, she had simply stepped back and I had gone flying.

With intense pain all over my body, I was unable to gather my strength, and I lay on the floor.

"Hinata!"

"However, I grabbed her leg."

"Giving it your all, huh."

The student council president's voice.

"Of course I am."

"If possible, I would like to avoid injuring people."

Idle talk even at a time like this.

"Wasn't it easy for you to stab him yesterday? [tl note2]"

"I don't wish for people to murder each other."

"Aren't you a person too?"

At the critical moment, I butted in.

"The unreasonable people in this world who have focused on the principal because they think the principal is the highest position. However, they are wrong, in this world, the principal is of little consequence. As this error has continued to propagate, I must correct it."

She kicked her leg a little.

Just a bit.

Just a bit, but I had been grabbing her leg, and I went rolling away across the floor.
"All right, understood, I'll now release the innocent principal."

Yurippe put the gun down from the principal's head and loosened her hold on him.

I didn't have the strength to lift my head to watch her.

"The misunderstanding has been cleared, is everything OK now?"

"Hand over the gun, that's the original culprit."

"Ah, OK. I don't need this thing anymore. I'll give it to you, but can you stop pointing that dangerous looking blade at me?"

The student council president wordlessly nodded her head, and then barely moving, the blade on her arm vanished.

This sure was some scene.

Yurippe wore a relaxed expression and walked forward.

The student council president reached out her hand for the gun.

Suddenly, diagonally from her hand, Yurippe aimed the gun at the student council president's forehead.

"How did you get your power? You have three seconds to answer, or else I'll fire. Three, two...."

"..... Hand Sonic"

At once, I saw the blade once again appear from her arm.

Yurippe!

I reflexively jumped from the ground and blocked her.

Puu-sii!

The blade pierced the side of my torso.

"Hinata!?"

"Ahhh... I said it before, in a time of danger, I'll be your .... shield.... protect you....."

My consciousness got fuzzy....

The last words I heard were.....

"This body of mine won't die."

Is that so... this set up, I forgot again.... [original tl note 1]

~ ~ ~

A white ceiling.

How many times have I woken up here again?

When I was alive I was healthy enough to never be in a place like this....

How unfortunate.

The wound in my ribs was already healed, in this world not only was it impossible to die, but wounds healed especially quickly.
Even if various parts of my insides still throbbed dully.

Yurippe was next to me sitting normally in a chair, looking down at me.

"You've worked hard, Hinata."

"Are you OK, Yurippe?"

"I'm fine----"

"I'm also not in any great pain."

"Who cares about you, I'm thinking about the gun, that gun."

"Gun? What happened to the gun?"

"It broke, by that girl."

"That kind of thing can be broken too?"

"Using that hand sonic whatever, it split after one strike."

Hand sonic...

The student council president's last words, as she said it, the blade appeared.

"Is that the name of that blade?"

"It's like the name of a weapon from anime, maybe she's an otaku?"

"Did anything happen after the gun broke?"

"Nothing happened at all, that girl and I carried you over here."

"Really.....

"Can you get up now?"

"Uh. It still kind of hurts."

"I'm hungry now, let's go to the cafeteria."

~ ~ ~

A late dinner.

I bought curry rice from the vending machine; I guess it was a weird time, as there were only a few students here and there.

The cafeteria was two-story building with an open center, through the ceiling you could see the stars; tonight the night sky was colored sky blue, perhaps due to a shining, bright moon.

"You really like curry, huh?"

"Don't you always order udon?"

"I get a different kind every day, tonight is steak udon."

"Really, then I guess I'll add some nattou. Nattou curry."

I pressed the button for nattou.

"Eeh? Are you serious? Are you going to eat such a strange thing in front of me? Ugh, I get sick just thinking about it. OK, let's disband. Bye."

She immediately prepared to leave.

"I'll eat them separately, OK?"

"So, having survived this battle, what have we learned?",

I asked, as our meals were placed face-to-face.

"This was your battle plan, but you want me to give a summary?"

"Well, my conclusion is that the student council president is a monster, but besides that."

"You sure are an idiot. Geez, could you not open up the nattou here and eat it when you go back?"

The nattou was still in its box, and hadn't been opened yet.

"What's the matter, does it scare you?"

"The smell of that stuff is like unwashed boy's gym socks, basically."

"..... could you not say that sort of thing to someone who's about to eat nattou?"
"I only said it because you asked."

"Then it's my lack of manners. More seriously, are you implying that the student council president is not a monster?"

"She is more like an equivalent of God, that's all I can say."

"Sorry, I don't know what you mean by an equivalent."

"Ahh, here is an idiot.... Who are you?"

"It's your partner. Then is she God? Or is she not?"

"Equivalent to God means that she has the same status, or perhaps is second only to God. I don't recognize you, what are you doing sitting across from me?"

"I'm your partner. Then, what is that power of hers? That thing called Hand Sonic."

"My conjecture is that it's a power bestowed on her by God. That girl is a response mechanism to the principal being taken hostage and other such emergency situations, in other words, her existence is to protect the order of this world. Do you understand? Random passer-by A."

"I'm your partner, do you understand yet? So you're saying that that girl is like an angel."

"Angel?"

"She's a servant of God, right? That makes her an angel."

"Oh, really... angel, huh? That's a clever way of putting it. That's an interesting thought, I accept it. Strange person A."

"I'm your partner. So what should we prepare to do next?"

"Given that an angel is protecting the order of this world, then we should destroy that order."

"Is that so?"

"That's how it is."

"How do we do this?"

"Who are you?" [original tl note 2]

"I'm your partner!"

As she was about to reply, Yurippe suddenly stopped talking and began to relish slurping up her noodles.

In other words, once again, my job was to think of a suitable plan for this situation.

~ ~ ~

"You got back kind of late tonight, did something happen?",

Ooyama worriedly walked over and asked me as I returned.

What a cute villager A.

"My stomach was pierced by someone's blade."

"Hey hey----!! It'd be best for you to break off relations with that friend of yours!!"

"No no, it was a different person."

"And you somehow survived!! Your surroundings are much too dangerous, Hinata!"

"The lifestyle of getting stabbed is interesting though."

"No way no way no way no way! That's simply the taste of the thrill seeking drug!" [tl note 3]

"Here's a gift I received for surviving, please enjoy it before it expires."

"Wow! It's my favorite, nattou! Thanks!"

"Whoa, flag triggered, are you going to give me an item?"

"Eh, item? What's that?"

"When a villager receives an item it likes, often in these situations, it will give up a key item crucial for further progress past a previously insurmountable obstacle."

"What are you talking about?"

"The afterlife stage of the game."

"Huh? This world is a game?"

..... Upon hearing these words, I stiffened up.

"How are we supposed to leave this world?"

"Uh, please wait a second....."

"Hm? Ah, no worries, you can go bathe first, have you been waiting long?"

"No way no way no way no way, I want to say something to you....."

"What, your face is all blushed?"

"Ooyama, you... know what's going on in this world?"

"No, I don't understand anything, only that this is the afterlife."

"Ahhh! You're not villager A!?"

"Villager? Again with the gamer talk?"

"You.... are a human....?"

"Of course, like you, as you see, but just already dead."

No way.....

Yurippe.... the new ally is much closer than you thought, in fact, right before my eyes.....

-END of Navy Blue

Notes from the translator

Notes, mainly stuff I'm not confident about:

tl note 1) 似乎是以校长为人知负隅顽抗 not too sure here?

tl note 2) The text says yesterday 昨天你不是轻易就此下去了吗？but it must be referring to two days ago, right?

tl note 3) 那简直是一味追求剧烈效果的虎狼之药啊 I have no idea if I did this right

The original TL left in some weird story at the beginning of the file which I didn't bother to translate.

original tl note 1) Isn't it sad Hinata, if you were the main character, you'd immediately be UP again

original tl note 2) Puuu....

random stuff:

Special thanks to perapera-kun and CC-CEDICT for all the vocabulary I didn't know.

The Chinese text has all sorts of "typos" (same pronunciation, but wrong written character). For example, Yurippe is sometimes (correctly) Little Lily: 小百合, and sometimes "Little white and" 小白和, another example: 一群教室 (a crowd of classrooms) instead of 一群教师 (a crowd of teachers)

同伴 = "partner", following the previous translator though sometimes I translated it to "ally" idk lol

男人 = "the man" or "that guy" referring to the male student who took the principal hostage in the beginning. Both sound kind of weird in English.

吐槽= "butt in" = a reference to tsukkomi, I think

学生会长 "student council president" is how Tenshi is referred to mostly, until she gets called 天使 which I've translated as "angel" for now, I hope you can see why.

And I hope you don't mind that I used "udon" or "nattou" instead of some lame English translation of these foods.

解散 = "disband" following the previous translator. Sometimes I used "split up" or something.

计划 = plan = keikaku

麻枝准×ごとP《Angel Beats!》前传终于出现新同伴了！？

Angel Beats!
エンジェル ビーツ

第3话
Melt Down

动画版主角的好友日向与女主角百合。开始向神报仇的2人，是如何增加同伴，建立「死后世界战线」的？由动画脚本师麻枝准先生献上的，前传小说第3话。

第2话简介

陷于死后世界的日向，决定与在这个世界中遇上的少女百合（昵称“小百合”）一起行动。不过，百合勇往直冲的性格，让日向被耍得团团转。在向神报仇这个大前提下，终于抓住了‘天使’的线索，却找不到可以追索的手段。就在这个时候，日向发现了第3个同伴……

Angel Beats Track Zero Chapter 3: Meltdown

Version 1, April 20, 2010

Notes from the translator

Hi all, please email corrections and other comments to irreduciblerepresentation (at gmail). I didn't do much editing, so feel free to suggest better grammar, etc. if you care.

The Chinese translation I translated from is in the zip file in mediafire.com/angelbeatstrackzero, as will be the most updated version of this file.

*Original TL message: This Chinese translation is by hades9053, all rights reserved, etc. Please include this message with any distribution of this file. In order to avoid conflicts with eventual anime subs, all names have been left in Japanese.

Notes from the editor

I honestly have no idea where the image for this chapter is meant to go, so it's been inserted somewhat randomly. If you know to what line/s the image corresponds, please email me at Jesse5.1@hotmail.com.

Chapter 3: Meltdown

"Wait, wait a minute! We're going to meet your friend, Hinata?"

The next morning, at the start of the first class, I caught Ooyama's hand, and walked into the quiet hallway.

"Yes we are, so what?"

This response from me was like a mix of Yurippe's catchphrases. Damn, I'm probably completely brainwashed.

"That's too violent!! No way no way no way!! Forget about me!"

"Do you know anything about this world? Our bodies can't be killed."

"Even if that's so, if I'll have my eyes poked out by chopsticks, be shot by a gun, or whatever, I don't want to have anything to do with people like that!"

"Are you a human? Then it's impossible for you to avoid being wrapped up in this. Sorry."

"Save me----!!"

I dragged him along.

~ ~ ~

"Who's this guy?",

Yurippe asked me after she glanced at Ooyama.

"He's an ally that I found. My roommate is a human."

"Is that so? Well, being afraid to this extent really isn't normal. He's definitely human then."

Ooyama crouched on the floor, and shivered like a newborn fawn.

"He's really quite frightened, how pitiable.... He must be having flashbacks of memories of his death. Did he just arrive here.....?"

"Actually, it's a bit difficult for me to say, but...."

"What is it?"

"He's afraid of you."

After a kung fu move in the blink of an eye,

"Are you joking?"

"No, I'm serious."

"Hey, hey!? Does facing me really turn people into such wrecks? This shivering isn't like needing a trip to the toilet!! What does it take to make a person like this!?"

"All I did was tell him everything that's happened in full detail."

"Huhh--------!?"

"No, um, it might be from a tiny bit of exaggeration...."

Bam!

A fist landed in the pit of my stomach.

"This is all your fault..."

Yurippe stepped over my fallen body, and walked over to the similarly crouched Ooyama.

"I don't know what crap that moron put in your head, but relax. I'm your ally."

"Wahhhhhhhh----!!"

Ooyama covered his hands with his eyes, and tried to roll away from her.

Yurippe gave me a dirty look.

It's over.... well, I was already beaten down on the ground anyways.

Yurippe inch by inch moved over to me.

Is she going to beat my corpse?

Yurippe grabbed the lapel of my uniform and lifted me up.....

Bam!

"Uwah! Hinata---!!"

The last thing I heard was Ooyama's sad cries.

~ ~ ~

A white ceiling.

"Hey, your roommate ran away."

"..... of course!!"

I jumped up in bed and butted in.

"Why though?",

she asked with a lame voice.

"Seeing your roommate be kicked from the rooftop!?"

"But I already said you won't die ~",

Once again, she posed her hand and laughed.

"Don't tell me that."

"I know. Just go and find him and say: Look, I'm perfectly fine, in this world you can't die. Why not say, my body feels even more relaxed and comfortable! I feel refreshed!"

"I think with that kind of talk, his mental trauma will be incurable even with the help of medication..."

"From what?"

"Your terrifying nature."

"Huh? My terrifying nature? What's that? But I'm so gentle and cool. Didn't I turn you into my ally in our vengeance against God just like this?"

Ugh.... she's definitely missing something deep inside her....

Aside from her immediately goal, she was completely blind. The details that should have concerned her were completely put out of her mind, truly....

But, what's the best way to explain this....

If this was a dialogue in a game, I'd get to choose an option here.
- Give an explanation to Yurippe.
- Do whatever Yurippe wants.
- Sneakily hug Yurippe tightly.

.....

Ignore the last one! No way no way no way!!

In that case, there are two choices....

Should I try to explain to Yurippe, or should I just go along with her...

But if this goes on, Ooyama will be too pitiable.

In this world, up until now, he's always been alone.

"What are you doing? If you can get up, hurry and find him",

Our dictator spoke urgently.

"Gee, Yurippe."

"What."

..... this face that she's giving me is not to my liking at all. It's like a snake staring down a frog.

"You....",

I said while avoiding eye contact.

"With this kind of talk, nobody's going to want to follow you."

"What? Are you going to preach at me now?"

In that instant, her tone changed just like that.

Uh oh....

She was completely enraged by that last statement....

But I can't back down now.

I once again looked into Yurippe's eyes.

"Vengeance against God. I know that's the most important point. But think about the method. One person is definitely not enough. The boy in the principal's office was like that. So it's essential to collect allies."

"So haven't we been looking for them?"

"Well, you .... you're too rough. There's no nice way of putting it, you're too rough, way too rough."

"Well, as this is the afterlife, what's wrong with that?"

"I just said it, with that kind of talk, nobody will want to follow you!"

"And I've said, I don't mind if I'm all alone!"

No... this I can believe. One person can't manage it. What I'm saying to this chick is a necessity. Without me at her side, she won't be able to accomplish anything. No matter where, she's always just charging through, no matter whose hand, she'll always shake it away.

"Yurippe, you... you're not as capable as you think you are."

"I can't believe I'm being called an idiot by an idiot!"

"Yes, that's how it is. You can't do anything if you act alone. So allies are essential. The way things are now is impossible. Allies won't join you. You haven't been thinking about anything but your own goals, but now you must consider how to gather some allies."

"..... Hey."

"What?"

"Can we disband now?"

"No."

"I said I didn't want to be your partner anymore. Do you understand?"

"No way. I've decided to follow you forever."

"Stalker?"

"Go ahead and think what you want."

"But I'm not OK with this."

"It's because they still follow people around when they're hated that makes them stalkers, right?"

"Didn't I say I didn't want to have perverts like this around me....?"

Yurippe eyed me with contempt. This was actually the first time I got this kind of look from her.

That is to say, she was serious.

The pit of my stomach felt as if it was being crushed.

I ... was just speaking the truth, right?

Can I believe in myself?

Even if I'm really hated by her ....

That's fine with me.

I unwittingly thought this way.

~ ~ ~

"Yo, Ooyama."

I found him sitting on the net of a deserted tennis court. He was staring off into space, so I patted him on the shoulders.

"Whoa, Hinata!"

Ooyama jumped up in surprise from the net.

"Are you OK!?"

"I'm totally fine, after all, I was already dead. In this world, no matter how grave your injury, you'll always get right back up."

"You're dead too, Hinata.... How sad...."

"You know, you're a pretty cool guy."

I began to think very carefully. Before, I thought he wasn't a human, so he made me pretty uncomfortable. But thinking back on his previous conversations with me, I could only now interpret them from a human standpoint.

"No no, don't flatter me. You're the cool guy, Hinata, you sacrificed your life to let me escape.... Wait, you're still friends with that person, that's truly impressive."

"No, sadly we're not friends anymore."

"Huh? You and her had a falling out?"

"Instead of saying that we had a falling out, it'd be better to say that she's discarded me....."

"Ah. So that's why you're sporting the long face."

So what...? Isn't this just like telling someone how your love life has failed?

"I'm sure you'll reconcile after a bit of time."

This bastard has no right to be comforting me.

"I... now I'm all alone again...."

Back to the situation I was in when I first got to this world.

"Don't you still have me?"

"Right, so I do.... Sorry, I forgot."

"I'm right in front of you, this is unforgivable!"

Saying this, Ooyama was the very picture of laughter.

What a cute bastard.

However, what's my objective from now on?

What should I do in this world?

Continuing this line of thought, there is something I'm supposed to do.

That is, of course, to sort out my thoughts. **[tl note 1]**

If I complete this task, then I can leave this world, and be reincarnated. That's what Yurippe said.

Is that really true?

If that's the case, shouldn't I pour myself body and soul into this task?

But I wasn't too clear on the method.

At this moment, I suddenly thought of something.

Isn't there an angel? If she is an emissary of God, then her duty must be to safeguard the purpose of this world, right? If I just go ask that person it'll be fine.

"Ooyama, what are you going to do now?"

"Well, seeing as you're fine, I'm going back to the dorm to sleep. Are you coming too, Hinata?"

"I don't just mean today and tomorrow, I'm asking about your plans for the future, starting now."

"I guess I'll just keep on going to class as usual."

"Is this how you're going to straighten out your feelings?"

"The physiology of feelings? Feelings have a physiology too?" **[original tl note 1]**

"Not physiology, straighten out as in clean up and make clear."

"Oh man, what an embarrassing mistake."

"If somebody wanted to write your biography, they might never make it as a professional author."

"What's that? Making fun of me?"

"I'm just telling the truth. No, probably the opposite. It's too fake. No, that's still not right. Hey, Ooyama, what kind of a character are you?"

"Don't ask me such incomprehensible questions so earnestly..."

"Haha, that's not a bad reaction."

"Conversely, dealing with you has completely confused me...."

"Then, back to the original topic, how's straightening out your feelings coming along? Making any progress?"

"What's that? I guess I don't quite understand..."

"Man, you really don't know anything, do you."

I then told him what I had learned from Yurippe. That I'd gotten it from her was self-evident.

"So this world exists for that purpose! I had no idea!"

He was as surprised as I thought he would be.

"Straightening out my inner heart, huh. I've never even thought about that sort of thing before."

"Now that you mention it, is your life even complicated enough as to need any straightening out?",

I asked rudely without thinking.

But Ooyama, at this time....

"Straightening out, ah... heh...."

He laughed while gazing off into the distance.

"Hold on a sec! You're playing a character like this!? Take it easy!! Where'd the real Ooyama go!? Give me back Ooyama, you bastard----!!"

"I -- don't -- under-- stand -- what -- you're-- saying-- at-- all-- Hinata ---"

I desperately shook him by his shoulders, and I couldn't hear what he was saying.

"In brief, first chill out, Hinata."

"I never thought the day that you'd say that would ever come... But, what were you laughing and staring at just now?"

"Even someone like me will become like that when he reflect back on his life."

"Really..."

So even this guy had experienced a confusing life when he lived.

"Straightening out one's feelings, huh. I don't even feel like doing it."

"Why?"

"Living was just filled with hardship, wasn't it?"

"Is that so...."

I asked myself the same question.

"Then, Hinata, why don't you prepare to achieve your goal?"

"Me? Don't mind me. My business... well, whatever...."

"Then my affairs don't matter either."

"That's no good."

"Why not?"

"That's just my nature. I won't let people who get involved with me act as if it doesn't matter. I'm worried for you. Especially because you're usually so carefree, but now you seem to be carrying some heavy emotions around."

"You really are like the protagonist of a game, Hinata."

"What's that about?"

"Trying to solve everyone's problems by yourself. If I had had this kind of a friend.... it would have been great."

"You've got one now."

".... eh?"

"Aren't we friends?"

"Haha... it really feels like I've entered the world of a game. Hinata is the main character, and I'm the troubled... villager A, right?"

"Moron, we should be allies. We're a party, exploring this world together."

"What class am I? Monk?"

"There you go picking such an ordinary class. Isn't a knight fine? Wouldn't rushing headlong into battle be more cool?"

"Nah, that 'Hundred Man Beheading' technique is already someone else's, granted it doesn't fit exactly, but nothing else seems as suitable."

"A knight with a 'Hundred Man Beheading' technique? Who are you talking about?"

" 'Hundred Man Kick'? Or perhaps just 'One Hundred Kicks'? In short, a very brave and powerful knight."

.....

"Surely that girl is in the party too, right?"

.....

"Though she's tormented by some pretty serious worries, and sometimes will ruin the friendly atmosphere.... even so, you'll still be with her, right Hinata? You'll still continue to slowly explore the world together from now on, right?"

.....

"She's definitely all by herself right now."

.....

"She's still your ally, right?"

.....

"..... Of course.",

I let out a long sigh as I answered.

Extremely seriously, but also very naturally.

Yes. I can't not chase her down.

That chick is a very lonely person.

If I don't reach out for her then.....

But would she reach out and grab my hand anymore.....?

"Hey Ooyama you monk. Can you buff my defense with some spells..... something so I won't surrender no matter how much I'm scolded or what kind of violence I'm faced with?"

"Haha, that looks like exactly what you need! OK, Magical Cure! Is this gonna be OK!"

Ooyama raised his arm and formed a fist, and pointed his thumb towards the sunny, cloudless sky.

"Although that just felt like recovery magic, thanks anyways!"

I also gave a thumbs up, and started back.

~ ~ ~

I went to find her, the most powerful ally, Yurippe.

I ran up the stairs to the roof.

The bright sky opened up before me.

But nobody was there.

".... Yurippe."

I lightly said her name once, then returned to my senses.

I had to search every nook and cranny of this school.

That chick has definitely not weakly faded from this world.

That lively girl.

She's definitely somewhere inciting a riot and causing trouble.

Finding her will be as easy as picking out a beautiful shiny glass bead from a beach of sand.

~ ~ ~

I was running in the school building.

"Hahaha."

I actually laughed.

I had heard a loud clamor.

And in its center, of course, was none other than the abusive voice of Yurippe that I had long grown accustomed to hearing.

As I dashed into the riotous classroom, I saw a crowd of people encircling Yurippe, who was riding on the back of someone like a horse.

The person beneath her was the student council president.

"So, hurry and answer. In this world, where is the secret to the conspiracy hidden? Where are we being observed from?" **[tl note 2]**

"I don't know."

"If you don't say, I'm not coming off, and this trouble isn't going to end."

"That's not what's going to happen."

"What, are you going to stab me with that blade of yours!? What do you think that kind of violent repression will solve?"

"Shouldn't you be asking yourself that?"

" ! How about I have you taste the flavor of death... ?"

Yurippe grabbed the student council president's head with both her hands.

She'd completely lost it.

Was it because I had left her side?

Was that what set her off?

Well, now was not the time to think about that. I had to go stop her.

I parted the crowd and entered the circle. But just as I was about to reach her with my hands, she was dragged away.

A very sturdy-looking teacher lifted Yurippe up with both hands from behind.

"Don't get in my way, I'm talking to this bitch right now!"

"All I see is some rather evil-hearted bullying."

"She's not a human, though! She's an angel with special powers! Don't you see that if I don't do this, then we're not on an equal level?"

"What you're saying makes no sense.... You can explain all this in the student guidance office, but right now, you'd better behave."

I suddenly heard the sound of something breaking.

"You bastard..."

As Yurippe's head hung down...

She lifted her head up again with incredible energy.

"DO YOU THINK I CAN JUST BEHAVE NOW, YOU MORON ---?! WHAT KIND OF GUIDANCE COULD I GET FROM INHUMAN BASTARDS, YOU IDIOT-----?! DO YOU UNDERSTAND MY EMOTIONS, STUPID ----?! I've been tempered by this environment that turns highly capable people abnormal and unreasonable, could you understand that, you idiot---?! LET ME GO, HEY---!! DISAPPEAR, BEAT IT, GET OUT OF MY FACE, AHHHHHHHHH----!!"

Yurippe spit as she cursed.

But even faced with this, the teacher continued to restrain Yurippe's body.

However, the melting **[tl note 3]** of Yurippe's icy heart had ignited within me a burning flame. My body began to move on its own.

Pow!

My vertical punch connected directly with the teacher's lower jaw.

His body toppled to the ground.

With all my strength I hugged Yurippe to put a stop to her.

"What are you doing, why have you appeared again, you stalker!"

Yurippe twisted and writhed to try to escape.

"I'm not like that."

"What?"

"I understand what you're trying to say; I understand your feelings."

"You bastard, don't oversimplify me! AHHH!"

Bam!

I absorbed a headbutt.

This blow was so strong that I nearly blacked out for an instant.

But it was not effective. I had Ooyama's cure magic!

"It's going to be OK. I'm your ally. I won't let you become all alone."

"Who the fuck do you think you are? AHHH!"

Pow!

I was struck right in the face.

A thick and sticky but warm substance flowed out from my nose.

It was blood. Not only had it gotten all over my jaw and throat, but my nose was probably broken too.

But, had I not had Ooyama's cure magic, I'm sure my face would have already become concave. Her attack power had been reduced by this much.

"It's going to be OK."

I let go of Yurippe's body. Then I faced her and let a smile sneak onto my face.

"First worry about your own body, idiot---!!"

This time it was an uppercut.

Blood sprayed out of my nose.

Ha, I'm still holding onto my consciousness.

If I pass out, Yurippe would be all alone again.

I don't want to see that happen anymore.

That's the way I am, and isn't that how you are?

So, you can hit me as much as you like.

The number of times I've been hit says that I'm still fine.

I kept my unsightly smile on my blood-drenched face.

"What's this!? Do you think you're cool!? You suck, you suck!! There's no one in this world that sucks more than you!!"

Yurippe's fist was also covered in so much blood that it was dyed red.

But she still used that fist to pummel my stomach as she yelled.

"It's about time you let him go."

Yurippe's fist was grabbed.

By the student council president.

".... Let him go? What?",

Yurippe asked limply, as her momentum suddenly weakened.

"What are you furious about? Taking your anger out on other humans like you is a very cruel thing to do. You're just causing trouble for him."

Then, the student council president turned towards my pathetic-looking face.

"Sorry about that, I've let you be my scapegoat."

"It's nothing....."

"What are you going on about? I'm angry? That's not possible. How could I possibly express that kind of emotion or attitude in front of you?"

"Why?"

"Because I'm the captain."

"What of?"

"Troops who are rebelling against God."

"Is there such a thing?"

"Yes. Aside from this, you've just unwittingly admitted that you're a piece of this world."

"When?"

"Didn't you just explain simply the meaning of my behavior in this world?"

"This is what you're calling evidence?"

"That's something that none of these could ever do",

Yurippe said as she scanned the crowd, which had suddenly gotten much larger.

"These artificial villagers could never speak about the settings of this world. This is a high-level configuration that only an existence like you can speak of."

"What you're saying sounds interesting."

"Then, won't you laugh for me?"

"....."

"Can't do it? Then, you're not human."

"You're misunderstanding something."

"Say something then, Angel."

"Angel?"

Yurippe lightly struck my stomach. By this point, that was more than I could take. I staggered and released Yurippe.

Yurippe then stood up right in front of me.

"We hereby dub thee Angel. Let's go, Hinata."

"Mm, nn...."

"I will definitely ferret out God from you."

Yurippe stepped ahead of me to leave, and the crowd parted for her.

For the strongest warrior.

I followed Yurippe out to the hallway, where Ooyama was waiting.

When he saw the condition I was in, Ooyama became agitated.

"Ahhhhhhhh, this is terrible!! Magic, mystical shield!"

"Is this really the right time to use something like that....?"

"However, it looks like you've smoothly reconciled. That's great!"

"Reconciled? What?",

Yurippe addressed Ooyama with that 100% natural, innocent phrase.

"Huh? Didn't you two have a falling out?"

"Eh----, what's your name?"

"Ooyama...."

"Ooyama, I'm sorry that you were startled, but that was a staged act to draw you out."

"That's bullshit, right?"

Yeah, bullshit.

"It's because there was no way to recruit you under those circumstances. You have been drawn out by this person, right?"

"This... maybe that's so.... "

"That's right. That is to say, all has gone according to my plan."

Yurippe crossed her arms as she said this proudly.

Gee, she really is lost in her happiness.

"That's the situation, so you should sincerely join us, worthy Ooyama."

Under these circumstances, I began to play along too.

"Hey, you can't turn down an invitation from the main character."

"What are you saying? Aren't I just the captain here? So aren't you supposed to be obeying my orders? "

"Why do I have the feeling I'm going to die in our first battle....."

"Ahaha, haven't I said that you can't die in this world!"

She looked like the usual laughing Yurippe, and for a moment I felt a bit terrified.

Other than the recruitment of Ooyama..... had anything else changed?

What the heck was the flame that had engulfed my heart?

Don't tell me that even I was deceived.... no way, right?

No, no. I should just believe this. Otherwise, there's no way to turn the party over this captain.

"Then, what's your name?",

Ooyama asked.

"Yuri."

"But her allies have given her the friendly nickname 'Yurippe' ", I added.

"I told you not to act on your own."

"Yurippe, huh? That's a really charming name. Hm, I'll call you Yurippe too then."

"Ugh...."

This is my tiny counterattack.

What's the matter, got a headache?

~ ~ ~

"Huh? Rebelling against God?"

Pah----!

"Yes, Ooyama, when you joined us, you also gained this privilege!"

Pah----!

"But, won't this incite retribution!? Will I really be fine if I do this?"

Pah----!

"How could there be retribution? Using that kind of thing to cause people to serve Him would be too strange! What would He be then!?"

Pah----!

"Isn't He our creator?"

Pah----!

"If we were born in this world just for Him to give and take and play around with us, then wouldn't that be even more weird? We've got to denounce such unreasonable conduct, with our own power!"

Pah----!

"So that's how it is! Ah!"

The ball flew out off the tip of Ooyama's racket.

"14 - 0" **[tl note 4]**

The two of them were playing tennis, and I was the referee.

Why? Why this state of affairs?

According to Yurippe, exercising the body is a very important part of preparing to battle God, but in this world where our bodies cannot die, I think it's questionable whether our fitness and strength really could be improved.

I bet this was simply a way for Yurippe to blow off some steam.

However, the fact that the considerable distance makes conversing difficult was unavoidable.

"Then ----, how do we actually go about doing this ---- ?"

Look, Ooyama has to yell.

"Regarding that point...."

On the other side, Yurippe let the ball and racket bounce a few times, then tossed the ball skywards.

"Destroying the order in this world that Angel is protecting!"

Yurippe suddenly swung her racket and served.

Pow--------!

The ball went whizzing out.

"Wow, what brute strength!"

"No, that's not it",

Yurippe replied, then threw down her racket.

"The final chess piece has come here on his own",

she said as she turned to one side.

No, not to the side, but rather truly gazing at one particular point.

When did that man start standing over there?

"I'm starting to get interested. You lot sure are an intriguing bunch, huh?"

It was That man. The male student that single-handedly took the principal hostage and barricaded himself in the principal's office.

"If you don't want your head to go flying out like that tennis ball just did, you should behave and obey my orders."

The man let out an evil laugh and pointed a gun directly at Yurippe.

"That's an interesting thing you're holding. Wasn't it destroyed already?"

"Don't ask such unnecessary questions."

The mystery didn't stop there. The gun was loaded well with bullets. Where did he acquire these things?

"Uh.... oh no.... what should we do?"

Ooyama's voice trembled.

"How about you stop posing like you're about to receive a serve?"

"Umm, sorry.... I'm too tense to do that....."

Ooyama continued to hold a stance as if he would counter the man's gun with a service return.

Oh boy.... I let out a sigh.

Just what path will our party take now?

I held the scoreboard and lifted my head.

The sky was still sunny and blue.

----Continued in Chapter 4-----

TL note:

0) 消融 in the Chinese translation (which means "melt"), but according to the Japanese wikipedia, the title of this chapter is actually メルトダウン (Meltdown). See note 3, also.

1) 整理 = "straightening out", 内心 = "feelings", or "inner heart", Sub Smith translated this as "sort out your thoughts", I've chosen "straighten out your feelings" after this occurrence.

2) 这个世界的黑幕到底存在在什么地方，在哪里旁观着 Not sure I got the idiomatic meaning here completely correctly...

3) Another occurrence of 消融, so this might actually be "meltdown", not "melt" here.

4) shouldn't this be 15-0, since it's tennis? I just copied the number from the Chinese though...

Original TL note:

1) 日语里整理和生理同音 . In Japanese, "straightening out" and "physiology" are homophones. [It sort of works in Chinese, too.]

Random notes:

吐槽 = "butted in", apparently refers to tsukkomi

家伙 = "chick", "bitch", "bastard", "girl", or "guy" depending on gender of character and how I judged the intensity of the conversation to be.

领队 = "captain". It could also be "group leader" or just "leader".

天使 = "Angel". I've chosen to translate this literally instead of calling her Tenshi like we all do because of the way that she got the name. See chapter 2, too. Eh, whatever.

团队 = "party". Could also mean "team", but I chose to go with the MMORPG analogy (not that I've ever really played one).

麻枝准×ごとP 敬献

《Angel Beats!》前传

小百合与天使建立共同战线！

Angel Beats!

エンジェルビーツ

第4话

COLD SUMMER

「死后世界战线」是如何建立的？由动画脚本师麻枝准先生献上，讲述其原委由来的前日谭小说。从小百合与日向为起点的故事，开始将周围人卷入其中——

第3话简介

为了对那个强加给自己乱七八糟人生的神复仇，小百合开始在死后的世界中行动。对于她的暴起行径感到危险性的日向，决意作为她的车闸而跟随她。在激烈冲突的最后，2人加深了同伴之情。在加入大山这个新伙伴，再次确认目标的3人面前，另一个讲和人士出现……

Angel Beats Track Zero Chapter 4: Cold Summer
Translated By: Iso & RagnaParadise

Original TL message: This Chinese translation is by hades9053, all rights reserved, etc. Please include this message with any distribution of this file. In order to avoid conflicts with eventual anime subs, all names have been left in Japanese.

Editor note: All instances of “Tenshi” that appeared in the original translation have been changed to Angel, in order to remain consistent with previous releases.

Chapter 4: Cold Summer

The tennis courts were empty when we met in the afternoon.

“Let's kill Angel," said the armed man.

“There'll be retribution!”

“What did you say?!”

Ooyama flinched as the man gave a cold, hard stare.

“I believe the enemy cannot die. Aren't both sides clear on this?"

“If the injury sustained is supposed to be fatal, she'll be paralysed for a moment. That was why she had to sit on me before she stabbed me; I wouldn't be able to escape even if she was paralyzed.”

“Wow, you're actually quite smart.”

“Do I look like an idiot to you?”

The gunman faced Yurippe.

“What I meant is that you seem to be pretty reliable.”

“It seems that you haven't noticed the gravity of the situation."

The man drew closer, and pointed his gun straight in Yurippe's face.

“Don't worry. I understand. I'll carry out your orders."

Yurippe stood there, with no fear in her eyes.

"You have quite a bit of guts."

The man lowered his gun.

“What do we do after immobilizing her?"

“We'll just bury her alive.”

“She's unbelievably strong. Quite befitting of an angel.”

"We'll just have to dig a hole deep enough then, with as heavy a load as possible placed on top - that'll keep her down. It's best if we build a house on top and live there; that way, if there's anything wrong, we'll know immediately."

"How would I be able to sleep peacefully knowing that there's someone alive under my feet?" Ooyama protested weakly.

"Good, then I won't let you sleep!"

“How can you do that?! I'll die of exhaustion!”

Hello? News flash: you're already dead…

Whoops. It seems I have the habit of interrupting people now. All thanks to people doing the same to me.

"Quit yapping and start digging! Ten metres deep at the very least. I won't let you sleep until you've finished the work!"

"Te... Ten meters, that's too much..."

I can't agree more.

"Don't worry about how long it'll take."

Right, of course... Time is infinitely abundant.

"So I have to get involved in this too?" Yurippe pointed at herself.

"What, you want me to treat you as a lady? Too bad. You're not my type."

"Oh, that's a pity! Let's go then. Come on people; let's finish it in one day!"

"Ho... how is that even possible..."

With a gun pointed at our backs, Yurippe looked half-resigned as she led the way.

~ ~ ~

The sounds of spades invading the mud underneath our feet had been continuing for an hour, as we dug deeper and deeper. The land was harder than I imagined it to be, probably because students had been stepping on it frequently; we’ve barely dug a metre.

"Hey Ooyama, whatcha doing?" I turned around and asked.

"Gah... I can't do it, I can't even lift a feather now!" replied Ooyama, as he rested with the spade acting as a makeshift cane.

“Hahaha! I'm the fastest!”

Yurippe was digging vigorously.

“Holy...”

"I can't believe I'm losing to a girl. Am I that weak--- hey, wait a second!"

"What?"

Yurippe stood up and looked at me questioningly.

"Why are we digging one hole each?"

"I thought you wanted to have a contest on who the fastest digger is!"

"But I didn't say we had to dig a 10-metre hole each! It's pointless to have the other two holes!"

"Oh, you've just realised?"

"If you already did, why didn't you tell us?"

"Seems like you're quite an idiot too..."

"Never crossed my mind," Yurippe blurted. "Whose fault do you think this is, huh? Everyone looked so gloomy and annoyed, as a leader I was only trying to raise everybody's spirits, don't you see?"

"Yes, I finally understand *why* after your explanation."

"Fine then, come over here. Let's start working on this one." Yurippe pointed at her feet with spade. I had no choice but to put up with it.

“Let’s go, Ooyama!”

"Wait, so I've just wasted my energy? Just like that?"

"Just like that!"

"That's not for you to say."

"But it's your fault! You reap what you sow!"

"How can this be happening?!"

Grudgingly, Ooyama and I dragged our bodies over to Yurippe.
The whole she dug was definitely deeper, but the diameter was only the size of a basketball.

"It's too small... I think we should continue working on mine to increase efficiency."

"Excuse me?"

"Why’re you looking at me like that? Are you saying we should continue working on yours even if it's going to take us forever?"

"Of course!"

"Still, we should make the hole larger first," Ooyama said.

"Don't worry about the width. As long as it's enough to stuff the council president inside, it should be okay."

"Is this some kind of a breakthrough for burying people alive? Whatever it is, how is this supposed to fit the three of us if we want to dig 10 metres deep?"

"Of course I know that! I just wanted to test how much energy you guys have left. Okay, let’s proceed with Project Hole Enlargement! One, two, three, go!"

Bonk!

Our heads collided.

"Ouch! Stop getting in my way!"

"It's your fault. It's obvious this is going to be a problem if three spades are used to dig one hole at the same time."

"Fine then, I'll watch for now, you guys go ahead and dig!"

"And who was the person responsible for this in the first place?"

"Whatever, go on Hinata-kun!"

"Darn it..."

As I was complaining, it suddenly hit me that the man was still nearby.

I was surprised the man didn't say a word as we were doing such a sloppy job digging.

He was walking around a cliff, admiring the sunset.

I couldn't see his face as the sun was too bright.

Even from this distance, one thing’s for sure: the gun, gleaming from the sunlight, was still gripped tightly in his hand.

It was not long before the sun completely set. Ooyama was already on his knees, groaning: "I'm out of energy... I'm so darn hungry!"

The hole was already as deep as my height.

"At the very least, we should be allowed to eat, right?"

"Shhhh..."

Yurippe was standing on top. She put her index finger at her lips, signalling silence.

Hey wait, when did Ooyama and I become her slaves anyway? Come over and help us too! Darnit!

On a slightly unrelated note, because of the wind blowing in my direction from her side, I could just slightly see that she was wearing white panties underneath her skirt. It was something not worth mentioning anyway, so I kept quiet.

"What's up?" I whispered.

"He dozed off."

"Oh... Perfect."

I put down the spade and climbed out of the hole.

"I'll go steal the gun from him."

"Good idea.”

"How 'bout me?" whispered Ooyama.

"Just stay here."

As we left him behind, Yurippe and I carefully climbed up the hill. Maybe it's just me, but even stepping on the grass made loud noises.

In the silence, the guy was sleeping soundly, leaning against the tree.
It seems that he was completely exhausted himself.

His grip on the gun has loosened too. So light, in fact, that Yurippe only needed very small nudges to get the gun.

Yurippe spun the gun and hit the man's head with its butt.

"Hey you, wake up. We've just turned the tables."

The man opened his eyes slightly, apparently still a bit light-headed.

"... That was a wonderful dream..."

"Really? Too bad for you then, I'm kicking you to hell."

"... Can I meet her there in her utopia..."

Did the wires in his brain get entangled when he was sleeping?

"What are you talking about? Utopias are created by people, with their bare hands!"

"Right... Nicely said..."

"I'm the leader around here. From now on you'll listen to what I say and obey my orders."

"How is that a threat? We won't die here."

"Then I'll let you have a taste of death. You've tried it once before, no? Would you want another go at it?"

"Nah, you be my guest. Let me teach you a lesson so that you will never try this again."

I was wondering why the guy had a weird sense of serenity, just before I noticed what was going on.

He was aiming at Yurippe with another gun.

He had a gun in his hand once more, as if he cloned it from out of nowhere.

He’s going to shoot!

I ran quickly at Yurippe, praying I was fast enough...
BAM!—

The sound was dull. The bullet was already on its way.

And it hit me.

BAM!—

Another sound of a gunshot came from my side.

"Hinata! Run! Retreat!"

I felt my hand being tugged, but the pain in the shoulder was excruciating.

The pain made my body tremble, but instinct kept me standing, and soon after, running.

"Ooyama! Retreat!"

"Waaaa! Wait for me!"

We ran towards the forests.

Only when we were under a large tree where the moonlight couldn't even reach, did the three of us heave a sigh of relief.

"Don't worry, it's just a slight scratch wound."

Yurippe said as she looked at the wound on my shoulder.

SLAP!

"OUCHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

That slap on the shoulder was totally unnecessary.

"What in the world happened..." Ooyama asked with concern.

I also wanted to understand the situation, so I quietly waited for Yurippe to speak.

"I got the gun..."

In the darkness, we could barely see the gun that was once wielded by the man.

"... but that reprobate had another one hidden. He then fired at me, but Hinata ran in front of me..."

"Yep, I took the shot."

"And then...?"

"I returned the favour in kind, and then..."

She looked at the foreign object she was holding with a tense and nervous look.

This must be her first time firing with a gun, not to mention firing at a person.

"I had to pull the trigger; otherwise he would fire even more shots..."

Yurippe was explaining more to herself than to either of us. Nobody questioned her for opening fire, and nobody was blaming her for it.

"Where did you shoot him?"

"His waist."

"Well then, he's paralyzed for the moment. From the looks of it, I bought us some time, and I guess it could justify my shooting."

"Yeah..."

"But why must it come to this? We're all human yet we're trying to kill each other..."

"Maybe because things like these exist..." I explained, looking at the gun.

"Great. Now we have two more guns. How was this here in the first place? I don't understand..."

"Maybe he's from a yakuza!"

"And where can you find yakuzas here, huh?"

"....."

If this was the usual her, she would definitely shoot back with a this-is-what-you-should-be-thinking-about reply. But she was just staring at the ground, as though she didn't hear me.

"If the guy was shot, then he should be out of action for a while. Want to go interrogate him about the guns?" I suggested.

"And what can that solve?"
"We'll know where the gun originated."

"Hinata, you're getting this all wrong."

"What?"

"Currently, the problem is not the threat that the guns pose, or even their existence."

"Then what?"

"What we should be worrying about is how to get him to ally with us in this worst-case scenario."

I was extremely surprised.

We're talking about a person who will shoot without hesitation. What's she thinking?

"That's a bit hard, no?"

Congratulations Ooyama, you've just said something completely redundant. OF COURSE IT'S HARD. You can probably even say it’s almost impossible. However, this is indeed a challenge. The strategy would be hard to pull off.

"Okay... I want to challenge him to a classic duel. Man on man."

"... HUH?!" echoed Ooyama and I, completely dumbstruck.

"Are you a man?"

THUD! She kicked me.

"Who are you calling a man, huh?" was all I heard before she grabbed me by the collar and stared straight at me face to face.

"When you looked up from the trench this morning, did the area you were secretly looking at have the same dirty body part that you have? HUH?"

She found out?!

"I wasn't peeking! You were the one who stood there in the first place!"

"Hey, hey, I don't know what's going on, but quarrelling now isn't exactly the best thing to do right now," Ooyama interrupted.

"Look, Ooyama-san didn't even notice the opportunity even though he was in the same place as you were."

"Do you really want to argue? Seriously, don't try to flatter yourself. That's not exactly an opportunity. It's an unfortunate incident that you're using to frame me!"

"Hmph, I'm just saying. Is your guilty conscience acting on you now?"

“What did you say?!”

"Hey, hey, I don't know what's going on, but quarrelling now isn't exactly the best thing to do right now."

Ooyama's natural unchanging speech #2 has appeared!

"Hey, you'd better give up if you’re thinking of becoming a writer."

"What, you mean he didn't repeat it by chance?"

"Nah, he's just the usual dope."

"Are you for real?" asked Yurippe with a tinge of surprise and exhaustion.

"What, did I say something that surprised you guys so much?"

"You've just repeated your words exactly. This is what you call a copy-paste. This will never occur in real life; it's just impossible, especially in an interruption."

"Oh. I see. So what's the problem?"

I give up.

I'm guessing Sir Ooyama will continue to unknowingly act as the mediator between Yurippe and me. We can call it Ooyamagic! Now I understand why he's a sage.

"Speaking of which, what did Yurippe mean when she said she wanted to challenge him to a classic duel?" I asked after calming down.

"It's a fight between two guys with guns."

Hmm, is this fella trying to make me retort with a copy-paste too?

"But, Yurippe is female right?"

Good job, Ooyama. Plainly asking questions to which the answer is obvious, that is where your value lies in.

“That's the point. If a female challenges him, he definitely won't refuse.”

“That guy isn't dumb, he'll have something up his sleeves.”

“You really are a moron.”

Excuse me?

“Guys all think so similarly. I'll beat him at his own game and improvise if needed.”

“You have an idea?”

“Yep.”

“What is it?”

“Let Angel be the judge.”

“…… HUH?!”

Once again I echoed together with Ooyama. Crap, seems like I'm in no position to call him a dope…

“Aren't you hoping for too much?”

“With my verbal skills, of course not!”

Is it really possible?

Yurippe challenging the man, and appointing Angel as the judge...

At dinner time, I sneaked into the canteen alone and grabbed as many pieces of bread as possible and stuffed it into my uniform. I brought it back to Yurippe and Ooyama after that.

"I bet you went to get some really nice food!"

All I could feel in the darkness was the cold stare that Yurippe was giving me. "Of course not! I thought about it, though..." I replied, before tearing a piece of bread for eating.

“This feels exactly like camping.”

Ooyama's speech of peace soothed me, and we were all completely relaxed.

Not forgetting the fact that there might be someone cocking the gun in our direction in the darkness.

A sudden spike of fear forced me to check for people behind me. The darkness was so complete and engulfing that I wouldn't see an elephant at all if it were there.

"Just relax, you coward! You can't die anyway."

"I'd rather not be buried alive."

"Why do you think we're partners, huh? We've got to believe in each other!"

"I really want to."

"I wouldn't trust you."

"Are you kidding?"

"Doesn't matter anyway. Our friendship will last through everything, just like the stars above us."

"Well, if you're going to make a metaphor like this, we ARE already the stars above us."

What a conversation. Maybe the three of us can be stand-up comedians after we have reincarnated. While the two of us were talking nonsense, Yurippe was staring at us groggily. On the other hand, I feel much closer to Ooyama as friends as we chatted the time away before we slept.

"Touch me, and I'll kill you."

"Don't worry, even if you're going to kick me in your dreams, I'll still be able to avoid you."

One straight punch to the forehead just before I sleep. How kind.

~ ~ ~

Not long after, the sun shone brightly, and morning has come.

As the first rays of sunlight shone through the tree branches, it looked beautiful, like shimmering waves.

Speaking of which, when was the last time I actually went to the beach?

I stood up and moved around a bit. It seems I've completely recovered from all the pain.

Or, to be more precise, most of it; I could still feel my forehead throbbing.

"Zzzzzzz..."

Yurippe's completely different when she's sleeping. She's definitely cuter and more ladylike.

Judging only by how she normally acts, you would expect her to gnash her teeth and snore loudly during her sleep.

This sleeping, angelic look of hers will seriously lower your index. As to what index this is... well, let's just call it Yurippe's Index. Hmm, is it a good thing? As I thought about it, I kept looking at her sleeping soundly.

Before long, my stomach started growling.

If I woke her up, she'll use it as an excuse to kill me, so it'll be better if I let her wake up herself.

When Ooyama was awake as well, I started to prepare breakfast.

Blending in with the students going to school, the three of us made our way into the campus after the meal.

"Here it is."

"oomf--!"

I crashed into Yurippe who suddenly stopped in front of me. Ooyama followed just behind me, and I became the filling of the sandwich.

"OI, WHAT ARE YOU TWO DOING?! Are you trying to get in my way?!"

I swear, we should seriously consider going into the comedian business when we're alive again.

"Let's go."

Yurippe was the center of attention of strangers as she walked in with the footsteps of a Viking. People must be thinking we're troublemakers.

Ooyama and I had no choice but to follow her.

~ ~ ~

Sitting near the window with the best position in the classroom was a girl. THE girl.

"Ms Student Council President."

She looked up at Her Highness Yurippe.

"I want to have a duel with the man. Please act as the judge of the duel," Yurippe asked.

"Hmm...?" she asked, eyebrows narrowed.

You can't blame her. It's what every other person would do.

"If I lose the duel, I'll obey you."

"And if you win?"

"How about you treat me to a cup of tea in your room back at the dormitory?"

"......?"

Her eyebrows narrowed again.

"What I meant was, I wish to sit down and have a cup of tea with you over at your place. Forget everything that has happened thus far, and coexist in harmony."

So this is what she was talking about when she mentioned her "verbal skills"?

"Will our duel negatively affect you in anyway?"

"Negative."

"Well then, will you act as the judge?"

"On one condition."

"And what might that be?"

"That man will have to come for tea as well if he loses."

"Of course. In fact, I like it."

Yurippe smiled.

Just like that, Angel was tricked by Yurippe's sweet talk.

Right after that, we stormed into the Calligraphy Club's room and readied the brush, the ink and the paper. Yurippe started writing.

Yurippe's handwriting was impressively elegant.

"What did you write?"

She was writing extremely fast, and Ooyama and I were very curious. Other than the words "sports field" and "4pm", we didn't really see anything else. We would be scolded to oblivion if we asked anyway. I waited for the paper to dry before folding it carefully.

"Well then, the only problem left would be thinking of a way to pass it to him."

"I'm way ahead of you."

She dragged us along to the Archery Club training area.

Yurippe then proceeded to "borrow" a bow, and tied the challenge letter to an arrow.

"Whoa. How classical..."

"Well, we can't pass it to him face to face, so we'll just have to make do with it."

"Do you know how to use a bow in the first place?"

"I'll use my brainwaves to control it."

"Good."

"Huh? Really?! Doesn't that sound a bit farfetched?"

You know what, Ooyama, when the three of us are alive again, you can be in charge of the interrupting part of the comedy. Thanks.

The man was still sitting at the place where we last saw him.

"Hasn't he recovered yet?"

"He should have recovered by now. I think he just likes sitting there."

Even someone like me who dropped down from the school's highest floor could move on the second day too.

"Then we'll just have to target the tree that he's leaning on."

Yurippe raised the bow and pulled the bowstring slowly.

Well I'll be! From the looks of her stance, she looks no different from a professional archer.

Slowly... slowly...

As the bowstring was pulled to its maximum tension, she released it.

The arrow flew straight at him at the speed of light.

THUMP!

Right in between the man's eyebrows!

"OI, You've just turned your challenge letter into a suicide note on an arrow!"

"How is this counted as a one-on-one challenge? This is more of an assassination attempt!"

"Mission accomplished. He'll recover in the morning anyway. Let's go," Yurippe said, as if our retorts didn't matter at all.

Just like that, the preparations were done.

The wind was turning cold.

~ ~ ~

As the sun set, Yurippe's shadow extended to the corner of the sports field as she stood in the center.

Speaking of which, what season are we in? Does the cycle of the four seasons still continue after we die? From what my body could tell, it was either spring or early fall. The surroundings looked like summer with a tinge of coldness. What weird weather.

Standing a few steps away from Yurippe was Angel.

She had wavy hair that danced as the wind blew, and she looked gorgeous. It seemed that she was completely out of place.

Ooyama and I stood with our backs on the wall of the school building, observing as we waited for the events to unfold.

"They're not attacking each other from that far right?"

"This area's too big for that with just hand guns."

"Ah, so that's why she chose this place to have the duel."

"Just for your information, what you've just said is too long-winded from the perspective of a writer. Don't do it again, and keep it in mind!"

"It's not like I'm dying to be an author or anything..."

Yurippe seemed like she was talking with Angel. She suddenly smiled; But could it be a humorous conversation if only Yurippe was smiling?

All of a sudden, there was a loud cry from my side.

The man was holding Ooyama hostage with the gun muzzle against his temple. I thought we had no blind spots since we had our backs against the wall...

Did he jump from above?

I had the urge to look up and see what's happening, but this is not the time to move around.

"Why is Angel here as well?" the man inquired.

"She's the notary for the duel. She's here to judge who the winner is."

"You think I would believe that load of crap?"

"Hey, don't look at me. I didn't know she was going to agree in the first place, either."

It looks like Yurippe and Angel haven't noticed what's going on.

Hmm, or maybe Yurippe already predicted this would happen, so she's diverting Angel's attention.

Then what am I supposed to do?

Think, damnit...

"It's not good if you're seen now, are you?"

"……?"
"You're holding him hostage right now. That's obviously tainting the fairness of the duel. If Angel were to see this, as the judge, what do you think would happen?"

"Shut your gap... Are you trying to threaten me?" the man cocked his gun at me.

"Fire at me then. The sound of the gunshot would expose you anyway."

The man stopped moving. I'm about to stop breathing soon, just trying to think of a way to tell Yurippe what's going on.

Without a moment's notice, Ooyama's body was suddenly pushed towards me.

"Argh...."

I moved to stop Ooyama's body from falling.

"Thanks a lot, Hinata-kun..."

"Let's see what she's up to," the man muttered to himself, as he walked towards Yurippe, gun in his hand.

Still holding Ooyama in my hands, I looked at him walk away.

Now what, Yurippe...? I bet you already included my reaction in your strategy.
Yurippe and Angel turned their heads around as they noticed the man walking closer.

Yurippe then looked at me and mouthed something.

Are you hurt?... she asked.

Nope, I replied, and gave her a thumbs-up.

... Leave everything else to me.

At least, that's what I believe she was saying. But we're so far apart, it's not humanly possible for me to hear what she's trying to say anyway.

Are you seriously going to ask Angel to help you with this...?

“One.”

Angel started to count. It was loud enough for me to hear.

The two of them stepped away from each other.

“Two.”

Step two.

“Three.”

Yurippe and the man were moving away from each other with every step.

“Four…… Five…… Six……”

Still counting down...

“Ten.”

At the last step, Yurippe turned around and kicked about.

Sand and dust filled the air.

The man was still very calm; he didn't even flinch or move at all.

He coldly turned around and aimed his gun at Yurippe.

We're exposed?!

... Not good!

BAM!

The man fired.

What happened immediately afterwards was unbelievable.

CLANG!

The sharp, piercing sound of metal attacked my ears at the same time.

Angel deflected the bullets with hand sonic.

BAM!

From behind, Yurippe fired back.

This is just...

The perfect combination.

The man finally fell down.

We won...

Needless to say, there were questions left to be answered.

Why did Angel help Yurippe?

"WE WON!" shouted Ooyama happily, running towards her.

I followed suit.

Angel and Yurippe were arguing.

"It was obvious, I won."

"As if. I won."

"You lost. I saved you at the last minute."

"Look again. What basis do you have to say I lost? Or ask the spectators, if anyone of them said I lost, then I lose. Up to you."

"But they're..."

"Yeah! Yurippe won! Long live Yurippe!"

"Yippee!"

With them shouting all about, it's like the both of them are trying to keep Angel from saying anything. Ooyama's just being his usual dopey self, though, but Yurippe's obviously taking advantage of the occasion.

She then gave me a glance that said: "Come over and join in too."

"But....."

"Heh, we won!!!"

"YAHOO!!"

"IRON LADY, YURIPPE!!"

We circled Angel and danced and cheered away. It went on until Angel admitted defeat.

~ ~ ~

"Have a drink," Angel said as she put down the cups lightly.

"This place is so small," grumbled Yurippe.

"You don't deserve to complain."

"Oh~ really~"

My heart melted when I saw Yurippe pouting. What a cute face! The Yurippe Index has dropped once again.

"What did you expect the room to be?"

"I don't know, maybe bigger beds with nicer bed sheets?"

"You can't find that in this dormitory."

Angel's room was almost the same as those in the boys' dormitory. Not much difference of items as well. The only thing that I could notice was that the clothes and books were arranged very neatly.

As I originally had high expectations of the great Angel's room, this came as a slight disappointment to me.

"Hmm, what's this~? Ah~ Pyjamas~ Sooo cute~"

Yurippe was looking around as though it was her own room.

"Mmmm. It even smells nice."

All the best. Don’t even try and ask me to give my opinion. I won’t smell it.

"Give the orders, and I'll make Angel tell the truth."

That man was standing very closely to Ooyama.

He used his hand to imitate a gun shape, and pointed it at Angel.

Both of his guns were confiscated by Angel, but Yurippe was kind enough not to bury him alive.

"I would not give such a stupid order. Can you smell her other shirts and see if they've the same smell? Fold them and stack them neatly afterwards."

Yurippe then threw the shirt in the guy's face.

"AH!"

Ooyama was scared, but the man started smiling and was soon guffawing.

"Hmm! I wonder if Angel has body odour that contains poison from mushrooms?"

That scared Ooyama as well.

"What an interesting girl. What's your name?"

"I'm Yuri, but people can call me Yurippe if they want to. How about yours?"

"Just call me Chaa."

"Chaa? What's that?"

"My name, duh."

"Okay. I'll call you Chaa then. So have you smelled it already?"

Chaa laughed hysterically. He then lowered his head into the pyjamas and took a strong sniff.

"What's he laughing at?"

"God knows."

"You're just like my wife."

"HUH-----?!"

Ooyama and I shouted at the same time once again.

"Hey, you're still a high school student right? You're already married?"

“Yes. However, we decided to set off on a journey to look for a utopia that belonged to only the two of us. A utopia that didn't exist in reality... A distant world...”
I could not make out what he was saying after that, as his sentence trailed off into mumbles.

“Why were you two looking for this utopia?”

Yurippe's questions were sharp and straight to the point as always. Hello, pay attention to your surroundings!

“That's because her family wanted us to break up.”

“But, you two really loved each other, didn't you?”

“Indeed. We left our friends and family, hoping to be together forever thereafter. Yet, in the end we were still broken up... And just like that, I was on my own…… Why?…… I've been thinking all this while…… Yet I can't grasp the reason behind…… just… why……?”

“There are things you need to do in this world. And you're not alone now, you have me as a leader.”

“And us as comrades……”

“If we're drinking beer, count me in.”

How could there be something of that sort here? Just as I was about to voice it out, Yurippe simply replied:

“There's alcohol in the science labs.”

“Haha…… Hahaha…… Ahahahahaha!”

Looks like she had his funny bone spot on again.

“So similar……”

And once again, he was mumbling now.

"So simple... so insignificant... the things that I used to have... now…"

Halfway through his sentence, he started sobbing. Thanks to Angel's pyjamas, his face was covered fully.

Is he... crying?

"The tea's cold. Let me warm it up."

It seemed Angel noticed the change in atmosphere. She quickly shuffled out of the room with the tea cups.

Yurippe, however, seemed to continue searching through Angel's closet. I noticed she had quite a voluptuous figure.

She suddenly stopped.

“What's up? What did you find?”

“Why is something like this……?”

Yurippe slowly raised it up for us to see...

----Continued in Chapter 5-----

麻枝准×ごとP 敬献
「Angel Beast」前传
最强战士登场！！

Angel Beats!
エンジェルビーツ

第5话
Man Like Creatures

讲述「死后世界战线」从无到有之经过，动画TV版的原作麻枝准先生献上的前传第5话。同伴的增加，渐渐开始萌生团队意识的小百合一行人。朝着向神复仇，又迈出一步。

第4话简介

以向神复仇复仇为目的，清算生前的遗憾，小百合在死后世界中拉起队伍。在把天使也卷入其中行动后，持枪男阿蔡也加入到队伍中，并且成功地入侵了天使的房间。为了寻找有关神的线索而将房内翻得一团糟的小百合——有了惊人的发现……

Angel Beats Track Zero Chapter 5: Man-like Creatures
Translated By: Iso & RagnaParadise

Original TL message: This Chinese translation is by hades9053, all rights reserved, etc. Please include this message with any distribution of this file. In order to avoid conflicts with eventual anime subs, all names have been left in Japanese.

Editor note: All instances of “Tenshi” that appeared in the original translation have been changed to Angel, in order to remain consistent with previous releases.

Chapter 5: Man-like Creatures

CLAP!

The ball dropped in front of me as I lay sprawled on the ground.

"Ouch! Scraped again!"

"You idiot! Try harder will you? That was a simple shot!"

Yurippe was fuming. She obviously thinks that a bleeding elbow's not as half as important as getting the ball.

"You had full confidence in your skills right? We're losing here! What's this? That was just a bluff? To humiliate me?"

"Yurippe, listen up. I've been trying to hold back from saying anything, but I'll tell you all in one breath now."

I stood up slowly.

"What."

"Why must we have a game of volleyball before we start the meeting?"

"To exercise, of course."

"And why must you be the attacker while I be the defender and setter? Come, I'll be attacker. I'll show you what I can do. And the worst of all, why must we play volleyball in swimwear?! This is not the beach, it's the volleyball court! Look, I've already bruised my knees and elbows!"

"There're only four of us. So this is obviously beach volleyball, no?"

"I can say the same for mah-jong," Chaa said nonchalantly. Just a minute ago he was mercilessly spiking at me.

"That's not healthy! I can't release my anger and stress then."

"Ah, so you've finally said it huh? I thought it was for health reasons?"

"Well, it's to let you guys use up your energy instead of keeping them for your third basic need of life! If not who knows what will you guys may do to me."

"Speaking of which, what are you trying to do, dressing up like that?"

"I found it, that's all. Unbelievable. I wonder why this was in Angel's closet..."

What Yurippe was wearing was the only thing we gained from scouring her closet. A skirted bikini.

"That's why I said I don't understand why you're wearing that!"

"This is Angel's swimsuit. Maybe I'll get superpowers when I wear this. That's what I'm trying to get, anyway."

No, I bet my life that she just wanted to wear it! Pun intended.

"Quickly, let's try again! I wanna test it out."

"If it's only to verify that this is your everyday nothing-out-of-the-ordinary bikini, I think we've had plenty of chances. You've been spiked so many times already!"

"Sigh... I only wanted to have this on a bit longer."

Oi. Are you only thinking about playing?

"Well, that's about it I suppose. Let's move on."

"Now what, you want to have a dip in the swimming pool?"

"Are you stupid? We're not here to play all day, you know!"

God forbid you are male. Otherwise I'd have punched you right now.

"Hey Chaa," she called out, arms folded with her usual smile of confidence.

"What's up?"

"It's about time you tell us. How did you get a gun into this realm?"

~ ~ ~

After changing into our uniforms, we climbed the mountain.

"Here."

Chaa stopped right in front of a huge tree. Clearing the dense, thick grass, we arrived at a cave. It looked as though a giant mole lived in it.

"Don't tell me... We've got to go in?"

"Yes. Are you unwilling?"

"No. Ah, at least let me change into sportswear."

"Then follow me."

Chaa poked his head into the cave and slowly went in.

Yurippe signalled to us to go in first by pointing to the cave with her chin. Ooyama and I crawled in after Chaa.

In the depths of the cave, there was a board.

It looks something like a door… Chaa head-butted the board and knocked it down. In front of us was a small room.

We entered the room and stood up one by one.

“There's electricity in here...”

There was a light bulb illuminating the whole room on the ceiling.

Below, there was a wooden table and chair, almost like it was made during carpentry class.

“Did you make those?”

“I decorated the room, but this room was here to begin with.”

Chaa answered Yurippe with a low voice.

“Who lived here in the past?”

“This is just a sentry post.”

“Huh?”

“The road still extends downwards, though I haven't checked where it leads to.”

“What is that…… It’s amazing that you can stay in such a gloomy place.”

“If there were people living underground, that'd be gloomy indeed. But, are we here to discuss this matter?”

I gave her a reminder because she digressed.

“Nope. Then, let’s go take a look.”

“Mmm.”

Chaa pulled the seat over and sat down.

Then, he took one of the clay blocks which were piled up on the table.

“Where'd you get the clay?”

“As long as it’s clayey anywhere is fine.”

After Chaa moistened his hand using tea-green water from a bucket at his foot, he started moulding the clay.

It looked like something that needed a lot of patience. We waited tens of minutes.

"It's done."

In between his fingers, he was clamping something thin and slender, like a needle.

"ah, this was the clay block just now?"

"Yes."

"Yurippe took over the item, examining it with an interested look."

"It turned into iron..... This is alchemy? When'd you learn it?"

"At first, I wanted to build a house. If my wife ever came here, we could live in it together. There's clearly enough wood around here, but there aren't enough nails at all.”

"After that?"

"Initially I only used wood, but there were gaps. Afterwards, I decided to use clayey mud to fill the gaps."

“And after you did that?”

“I realised I was holding on to a nail.”

“The clay became a nail?”

“Uh-huh.”

Yurippe went into deep thought for a moment.

"Who knows, maybe we can do it too. Let’s have a challenge and try."

After that, it was a time for handiwork.

After 2 hours of battle, only Yurippe succeeded.

"That’s amazing, Yurippe!"

"It’s just that you two are useless....."

Ooyama and I looked on with shocked faces. It was too humiliating.

"But, even after so long we could only make a nail. Chaa, how'd you make the gun?"

"Form all the separate parts and then assemble them."

"The one just now was also a part?"

“Mmm. It’s the firing pin's core.”

“That means…… You remember perfectly the structure of a gun?”

“Yes.”

“Of course, you were forced by your lover's family to have a divorce.”

“There's no relationship between that and guns right?”

“He's indeed linked to the yakuza!”

Ooyama said loudly.

"You said that too lightly, as though it happened in the realm of some television drama."

"Wah, sorry!"

You're too timid.

“So Yurippe, what do you think of this alchemy?”, I continued.

“I'm not too sure……just like we won't die physically, this is a spiritual world, isn't it? Maybe there's some sort of link. With distinct memories and strong belief, something like this may be possible to realize in this world. Though if it isn't something simple, then it wouldn't be possible. Just like this nail. That’s why you can't form a gun at one go, but it’s possible to do so for the smallest components. In this case, it’s more like rearranging atoms than alchemy.”

“Sensei, I totally don't understand.”

“Let’s leave you aside and continue. Chaa, how long does it take for you to make all the components and assemble them into a gun?”

“I need a week. Counting by hours, I need around 170.”

“Without rest eh…… That’s a hard task.”

“If everyone splits the workload?”

“I may ask you guys for help in the future, but for now let’s leave it. What's in front is more important.” Yurippe said while looking at the door heading inwards.

“No opinions?”

Nobody shared the same sentiments as her.

“Let’s go”

“Hey! This is going to be a real dungeon crawl now!”

“Yeah, Yurippe, I don't think we're fully equipped yet.”

I didn't try to dissuade her, but instead asked Chaa, “How deep does it go?”

“I got to the 22nd level but gave up because I didn't have any food.”

“22 levels!! You're lucky you made it back alive!!”

You can't ignore something like that.

“So, Yurippe?”

“I understand. Then, I'll leave the water and food to you. And bring flashlights!”

~ ~ ~

I returned to the cave at the foot of the tree with mineral water, bread and two flashlights in a sports bag. An ecstatic Yurippe was making so much noise that I could hear it from outside.

She totally didn't try to hide it.

I went through the grass and into the cave.

After I entered the room, Yurippe leaned over, grinning from ear to ear. Totally disgusting.

“Hinata-kun, take a look at this. Do you know what it is?"

She gave it a blow, and the folded portion started turning.

Before I could give a reply, she continuously blew at it, so much so that she was blowing into my face now.

“It’s a pinwheel. What about it?”

“I made it!”

Er, why are you so excited?

“Ah, I see.”

“Using the clay.”

“Wow, you sure are nimble. With a bit more effort, you'll be able to make a gun."
“I don't do such boring things. A pinwheel is nice isn't it?”

“Then, give it to me.”

“No way.”

This girl…… Starting a conversation like she was trying to get me excited, and I still made it a point to complement her.....……

“We still have to make two more.”

I did a headcount. There was me, Ooyama and Chaa.

Three people.

Did she count me in?

“I'll be expecting them. Leaving that aside, it seems that preparation is complete.”

I put down the sports bag and took out the two flashlights.

“Well then, let’s go in while it’s not too late.”

After Yurippe carefully inserted the pinwheel into her pocket, she stood at the door leading inwards and kicked it open.

“It looks as though the roof will collapse any time……” said a terrified Ooyama, who was tasked with carrying the baggage.

I followed behind him, illuminating the path with a flashlight.

"It looks like it's been reinforced."

Yurippe, who was in front, shone her torch at the walls, showing that they were supported by wooden planks.

"Chaa, you never thought of luring Angel in here and burying her alive?"

"It would be a waste to bury her in such a curious place."

“My sentiments exactly. I'm really anticipating what lies ahead...”

“I think, we should just picnic here and then turn back……”

Do you think this is a test of courage?

“A dead end?”

Yurippe stopped walking.

“Nope.”

Chaa walked in front of Yurippe, kneeled down and clawed at the ground.
And with that, a stairway leading downwards appeared.

~ ~ ~

How deep did we go exactly...

Getting here was not easy, and the thought that we still had to go all the way back up made me shudder.

“Hello.”

Yurippe just did something totally weird.

“What 'Hello'.”

“I was thinking that people who lived underground would probably not understand Japanese.”

“And you think if you used English they'd be more likely to understand?”

“Well, according to how the Earth's population is distributed, that is the case.”

“Hey wait. What did you find?”

“I told you, underground dwellers.”

“WAAAAAAAARRRRGHHH ————!!”

A roar suddenly resonated from below.

Thunk!

The earth started to shake.

What did that thing use to pound the ground just now?!

In a flash I suddenly recalled Angel's hand sonic, but it definitely isn't something that simple. It was probably something larger, more terrifying, and more malicious.

“Nice to meet you〜”

Why the heck are you acting so leisurely!

“WAAAAAAAARRRRGHHH————!!

Thunk!

That thing pounded the ground again. This time, even our bodies shook from the tremor waves. What great brute force!

“I'm fine thank you～！My hands are full, you guys, do something!”

“Roger, I'll try to do something.”

Chaa stepped up to the task.

A short moment later……

“AHHHHHHHHHH————!!” Came Ooyama's dying cries.

“Hey.”

“What! Let go of me!!”

The underground dweller illuminated by Yurippe's torchlight had his hands bound behind his back by Chaa.

The sound of bubbling blood spurting out continued…… I seriously didn't want to shine light at it……

“Hinata-kun, join his body parts together quickly,if they're split up like that, he might not be able to heal.”

What?!

“His flesh has been severed, and his bones are broken as well.”

“You seem to treat other people's injury lightly!”

“Uuu……Yes.”

With my eyes closed, I pieced together the body parts. Initially the healed Ooyama looked pale,and couldn't stop trembling.We'd better add scotophobia to Ooyama's record afterward.

“Are you listening? Mr. Underground Man. Can you understand me?”

After handing Ooyama over to me, Yurippe began to cross-examine the man.

“What is your relation with that guy……?”

“We're the ones asking questions here!”

Thunk! Chaa kicked the wall.

“Forget it. Who was that guy you're referring to?”

When did you guys become such a ferocious team?

“This dungeon's Boss……”

“Is there such a thing?”

“That guy said to end this game I'd have to beat him……”

“A game eh……?”

“So I have to use my bare hands to end it all……”

“It won't end.”

“Huh……?”

“There will be no end in this world. It will only continue. That’s why we've got to rely on ourselves to bring about change. Relax; we're on your side. Join us.”
How would that irascible man agree so easily?

“……”

The man stared at Yurippe's face.

“……Okay.”

The record for the fastest recruitment has been born!

Why? What part of her do you see as credible?

“Release him.”

Chaa acknowledged Yurippe's command and released the man.

“I'm the leader, Yuri. Everyone calls me Yurippe. What about you?”

“Noda.”

“Well then, Noda-kun, here's the first instruction. Let’s go beat that underground Boss.”

“Leave that to me. Just watch your backs. As long as I have this, I'm unbeatable.”

With that, he picked up his weapon. But that "unbeatable" guy was restrained by Chaa.

“Noda-kun. We're a team. We’re not going to let you go alone.”

“Only I can beat him”

He had already broken off from the team.

“Let’s go.”

Hugging his long weapon Noda led the way.

Sigh…… What lay ahead sure is worrying.

~ ~ ~

Our five-man strong team continued venturing deeper.

"H-h-h-he-he-hey!! It's scary, scary I tell you! Let's go back!"

Just as predicted, Ooyama is now scotophobic.

"Hey, why do we have a coward in our team?"

It's your fault, damn it.

"BOO!"

"AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!!!!!!"

Ooyama shouted. Apparently Yurippe decided to turn around with her torchlight shining at herself, leaving him shell-shocked.

"Hey, hey, don't do something so meaningless. When did we make Ooyama our clown-cum-emotional-punch bag? Stop bullying him.

"It's just shock therapy..."

"Don't try and do that again. What kind of a leader are you, huh?"

"One that cares for the group! It's a bit cruel, but you felt compassion running through your veins when I did it, right Ooyama?"

"Yeah, I got it I got it! So let's go back..."

"No way. Let's go!"

The world's most unreasonable leader. Ever.

We continued walking down the absurdly long staircase.

"How many floors have we descended?" Yurippe asked when everyone came down.

"27th."

I could only shrug, but Chaa had meticulously kept track of it.

"Whoa. Already at 27th... For what purpose, exactly?"

"Why not ask the boss when we see him?"

"If this is really a game, what will we do if we really defeat the boss?"

"What's so bad about it? It's our current mission," Noda replied.

"So you're accepting this? Just like that?"

"Huh? What do you mean?"

"I'm saying this is the afterlife. Our main task here is to take revenge on God." While we're at it, why isn't Yurippe clarifying on what the group's goal is? Why me?

"Afterlife? Revenge on God? What kind of a setting is this...?"

"I don't know either, but that's how it is."

"This is a game, right?"

"Sad to say, it's reality."

"Reality...? How can this kind of weapon exist in reality?"

The one YOU are holding on to? Why not you answer that yourself?

"Then what are you...? Aren't you the female protagonist?"

"Female protagonist? What's that? I'm the group leader, can you understand that?"

"She's my wife, too."

I can't believe Chaa decided to crack a joke at this one heck of a bad time. Noda just stood there staring, ghostlike. Then again, we're all ghosts anyway.

"So... I'm not a protagonist..."

"If you really want to classify things, then you're probably a secondary character, I suppose. You're already on our team, so stop your yapping and listen to me."

"Huh... what secondary character... I don't want that!"

"Argh!"

Noda pushed Ooyama away and ran like the wind.

"He ran away..."

"Ran away, huh..."

"Wanna chase him?" I asked, flashing my torchlight in that direction. I can't even see his silhouette now.

"We're already here and you want to go back? Not me."

"So you're leaving our group mate behind?"

"He's just in charge of telling us that a boss is at the lowest floor of the dungeon! He's just an NPC, I suppose."

"Is this some superbly new and original way of splitting the responsibility?"

"He's just that kind of guy," Chaa said.

Hey, don't you have the slightest bit of guilt?

"Well then, let's go."

"Are we really moving on? What a leader."

"Wait a second, Hinata-kun."

Yurippe walked up to me all of a sudden.

"It seems like you have not made a decision. Any grievances you want to share?"

I've never seen her this scary for a long time now.

"Am I different from before?"

"After Chaa joined the team you've become very gloomy. Complaints, complaints, complaints. I can read your mind!"

"Huh..."

"Are you jealous? You must be!"

"How am I jealous? Who am I jealous of? Don't make empty accusations!"

"You must be jealous of Chaa, cause he said I'm just like his wife."

"Hmm, so this guy thinks I'm in the way or something? Sorry, didn't notice. I'll take note of that."

THUMP! He slapped my back hard.

"Wait, you don't have to be so sensitive!"

The way the group is responding... it's not right...

... Hmm? Am I really jealous of Chaa?

To be honest, he's not a bad-looking guy at all. Also, we all just saw how he managed to easily overpowered that violent runaway. (Let's not go into how he did it, shall we?)

So...

It's alright even if I'm not around?

Yurippe, the one who always makes me worry the most, now has a dependable partner.

Might as well just call me the extra character.

So now I'm nothing but Ooyama's bodyguard?

I kept pondering while we continued to move on.

"Let's eat."

We had our meal when we found a room comfortable enough for the four of us.

Yurippe was laughing and chatting with Chaa at the same time.

Ah, it didn't make me feel good.

Ha! This IS jealousy!

But why?

Isn't this a good thing? This completely unwanted person is now best friends with someone whose dead girlfriend looks exactly the same.

I have nothing to worry about. No more responsibilities to shoulder.

Casting my personal feelings aside, this group is perfectly alright.

.....

Somehow, this doesn't feel right.

Give me a second. Hmm... Is it really alright?

I have a feeling. A very bad feeling.

AH! I remembered.

Our group mate just ran off!

After Chaa joined our group, I kept my mouth quiet, and Yurippe's dictatorship has gone so far that it would've made Caesar proud. As a team, we're at the worst possible scenario!

"Hey Yurippe, I've a suggestion to make."

"Hahaha, your wife's really dumb!"

She's not even listening.

"Yurippe, listen!"

She turned around and looked at me after I resorted to shouting.

"What."

She looks extremely unhappy. Not like it matters.

"Let's go look for Noda."

"No... duh...?"

"Don't tell me you've forgotten about him?"

"Oh, that guy. What's up with him?"

"Let's go look for him."

"What're you saying? We're already here. Where do you think this is?"

"I know I should've mentioned this earlier. It's my fault. Now let's go look for him."

"Don't even try and get me to do something so unproductive."

"Well, it may be unproductive, but a teammate's a teammate. Someone alone this far down will feel lonely. We should go look for him."

"I have an idea," Chaa said.

"What?"

"Let's split into two groups. Yurippe and I will go further down, and you and Ooyama can go look for Noda."

"... what?"

"Whoops. Sorry. You can go further down with Yurippe then. I'll go look for Noda with Ooyama."

"Why are you apologizing?"

"I wasn't sensitive enough."

"Hmph... so, what do you want?" Yurippe asked.

HA! I get to choose again!

- Look for Noda with Ooyama.
- Venture down deeper with Yurippe.
- Ask Yurippe to change: School uniform -> Bikini!

What choice should I make...

Hey. What the... why is the third choice there?!

After arguing with the Socratic me...

"Chaa and I will continue going down. Yurippe and Ooyama will look for Noda and bring him back here."

"HUH? Why?! I don't understand!"

"At the bottom of this cave is the boss. If what Noda said was true then fighting is inevitable. So if that's the case, Chaa and I will fight it since we're the fittest. If we fight it together and all of us fail to beat it, then we will never ever reach the surface anymore. Also, bringing Noda back is your job as leader, Yurippe."

"No way! As leader, I should beat the boss."

What are you, some 5-year-old kid?

"It's extremely dangerous!"

"Duh. That's why."

"I'll leave the last hit for you."

"That kind of a small thing? This guy won't be able to do it," she said, while pointing at Chaa.

"Indeed."

Don't agree with her, darn it!

"Then this guy and myself will go look for Noda. Let's go," Chaa said, patting Ooyama's shoulder.

"So it's come to this... hey Ooyama. I gotta tell you this. If you really want to be an author, you'll fail immediately if you don't drop your silent attitude!"

"Okay, okay, I get it, stop repeating yourself..."

"Excellent."

Hmm. I feel like Yurippe is slowly invading my personality.

"Well then, since we've decided on what to do, let's quickly finish up and move!"

After the meal, we split into two groups, and pray for each others' safety.

"Hinata-kun, this is my parting gift. I call on thee, detoxify! Now you'll have nothing to worry about!"

"WHAT?! So all this while I've been poisoned?"

"Well then, let's go."

"When I find that fella, I'll tie a rope to his neck and drag him all the way back here."

"I'm counting on you!"

"See you!"

And the two groups parted.

"Hmm, now that you mention it..."

Just seconds after moving apart, Yurippe remembered something.

"What's up?"

"The two of us haven't been alone like this for a long time now..."

Yep. Stop lagging. Have you only just noticed? I realised long ago. Er, wait, Maybe it's just me being too sensitive.

"It feels like our fight was ages ago."

"My apologies, I don't recall ever fighting with you. The only thing I have etched in my mind is a one-sided fight and you trying to kill me."

"I'm just a female! Are you that weak? I was the one who defeated Chaa as well. The only thing you're good at is jumping off the top floor of the school building. I'm actually a bit worried for your battle against the boss."

"That's just cause I haven't been serious."

"And when are you going to start being serious?"

"Hmm, that'd be the time when you're in danger."

"I think you'd be finished even before I will be. So you can't treat things seriously even when you're in danger?"

"It's my nature, apparently."

"Sigh... Hinata-kun, you really make worry."

Excuse me? Who's talking now?

"Hinata, take this."

"Hmm?"

Yurippe handed me the pinwheel.

"What for?"

"I'll lend this to you. Don't spoil it, alright?"

"Then hold on to it yourself."

"I'll let you use it as a talisman for now. I prayed that you won't die."

"Oh..."

I stared at the pinwheel.

You can't die here anyway...

Well, at least she cares about me.

"Thank you."

I put the pinwheel in my pocket.

~ ~ ~

This staircase is absurdly long.

"What a wide space..."

Yurippe aimed her torchlight down, but all we could see was absolute darkness.

"Seems like the last floor, no?"

"I feel the same thing too. For some reason, it feels like the final boss is down there, waiting for us..."

"I wonder what the final boss is. Maybe it's the antithesis to someone like Angel."

"Or maybe it's a fire-spewing dragon!"

"We can't beat it without magic if it is, don't you think?"

"I thought you received Ooyama's magic blessing?"

"Yeah. All thanks to him I'm still standing here alive."

"I can see the ground now..."

"Yeah."

The ground was lit up by the torchlight in Yurippe's hand.

All I could see was mud on the ground. It looks like an unpaved road, as if signifying there's nothing else ahead.

"AAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!"

Yurippe wasted no time in shouting out the moment she reached the ground. Echoes came back not long after.

"Mmm... this place is so broad. Why don't you try too? You'll get this very nice feeling."

"How charming... however, I get the feeling we're merely announcing our grand arrival to the final boss."

"Let me tell you something."

"What?"

"The final boss... won't move."

"Why?"

"Well, the boss has to sit on the throne and give some prologue! It won't just attack us immediately."

....

Speaking of which.

It was your idea to address this... thing as the "final boss", huh, Yurippe?

Don't tell me you don't know anything about the danger that lurks ahead?

Looking at her walking ahead and shining her torchlight everywhere absent-mindedly, I wonder why in the world I did not ask her about it.

Whatever it is, I have no choice but to follow her in order to have the slightest chance of surviving.

~ ~ ~

"Take a look."

"You can NOT be serious..."

The boss was sitting on the throne after all.

Well, not exactly; just something that looks like it. It's strikingly similar to the one used by the headmaster...

It was a girl. She was sitting on that throne of hers, cloak wrapped around her. I couldn't tell whether she was a student from school as well.

"This is only her first form."

"What do you mean?"

"Once her HP bar is half empty, she'll turn into some other form."

When you put it like that, it seems like it really is going to happen.

"Well then, let's hear your prologue."

Yurippe pointed at the girl, waving the torchlight at her like how a professional would use a sword.

Yes, yes, but please be reminded that we're empty handed! What if it really becomes a monster?!

"... How shallow-minded," she said.

...

Come on, continue.

...

"... Let's start."

"So short!"

We don't even know what to say now.

"Hey wait a second, so we have to fight you now? You're not going to say anything fancy? Or give us an introduction? There’s too many mysteries left! If we beat you I'd feel so much less accomplished. Gah."

"What are you?"

...

Come on. I'll wait. Just say something.

...

Guess not. She's just keeping her lips sealed.

"She must be partially mute."

The girl stood up.

As the cloak fell off her, we could see a sword. Not again...

"Darn, she might be another angel of this dimension... and it looks like she's fond of fighting too."

"The fight's about to start."

"How do we fight?"

"I'm thinking..."

"Thinking?! We don't have that much time!"
In the blink of an eye, she moved in front of us like some teleportation skill.

She's THIS fast?!

"Uh oh."

"If this is some shounen manga, there would be a "TO BE CONTINUED" tag underneath this to save us..."

Tough luck...

----Continued in Chapter 6-----

麻枝准×ごとPが贈る
「Angel Beats!」前日譚
日向 奮い立つ！

Angel Beats!
エンジェル ビーツ
-Track ZERO-

第6話
バイ・マイ・サイ

麻枝准氏みずからが書き下ろす、「死んだ世界戦線」結成までを描いた前日譚小説もいよいよ佳境。電撃G'sモバイルでも配信を予定しているので、読み逃したキミは、48ページのQRコードからアクセスしよう！

Word:麻枝 准（Key）
Illustration:ごとP
Character Design:Na-Ga(Key)

第5話 あらすじ

チャーから、謎のダンジョンの存在を聞いたゆりっぺたちは、好奇心からそのダンジョン深く潜っていく。そこで新たに野田を仲間にするが、野田の勘違いで、大山・チャー・野田の3人と、ゆりっぺ・日向の2人とに別れて行動することになる。戦力が割れてしまったそんなおり、ゆりっぺの前に、恐るべき強敵が現れて……。

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Angel Beats Track Zero Chapter 6: By My Side

Version 1.1, June 17, 2010

Hi all, please email corrections and other comments to irreduciblerepresentation (at gmail). I didn't do much editing, so feel free to suggest better grammar, etc. if you care.
The Chinese translation I translated from is in the zip file in mediafire.com/angelbeatstrackzero,
as will be the most updated version of this file.

*Original TL message: This Chinese translation is by hades9053, all rights reserved, etc. Please include this message with any distribution of this file. In order to avoid conflicts with eventual anime subs, all names have been left in Japanese. The translation is for reference only. First released at "Everyday study garden" Key forum [link here: http://www.reaicomic.com/viewthread.php?tid=6584]
JS download link here `http://www.jsharer.com/blog/339599.htm`

Chapter 6: By My Side

"What now!? Have you got some secret martial arts ability?"

"There's no way there'll be a pause for that like some shonen manga!"

Right now, we had descended to the very bottom 30-somethingth underground level of this dungeon, and the Boss there had just closed in on us.

Under her cloak, I saw the dull glimmer reflection of light from something that looked like a katana.

"Are you an ally of Angel, no, the student council president also? What are you doing in a place like this? Just to attack passers-by? How do you tell between friend and foe?"

I didn't give our opponent a chance to respond between my questions. I had no choice, if I wanted to survive.

"I know what you want to say. That's right, exactly as you think. Join with us."

"Wait, don't give up while others are trying to prolong the dialog!"

Whoosh!

I thought my nose had flown off.

However, with great difficulty I had managed to barely dodge.

Yurippe and I were shocked into retreating.

"No way… Looks like there's no chance for a peaceful resolution… we'll have to beat her."

"How?"

"Use some skill or other."

"This isn't a game battle, what skills are you talking about?"

"Anything will do."

"Then I'll intimidate her with my yell. Listen, WAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH----!!"

"AH! My ears will go deaf!"

Yurippe recovered from her paralysis!

"Though perhaps she was just bluffing, and maybe she's actually pretty weak. Let's test her out with a surprise attack."

"No, did you not see her speed? That's already unreachable by humans!"

"Ha!"

Yurippe, paying no attention to me, charged forward to strike. All she wielded was a flashlight. A bare-handed attack is too heedless!

The woman's cloak swayed a little. The blade glimmered.

Just before her attack struck, I decided to trip Yurippe.

Pow! Yurippe tumbled head over heels.

Several strands of her bangs fluttered down, cut along a straight line.

That was no hesitation at all… if Yurippe had continued her attack, her stomach surely would have been sliced open….

"What are you doing, don't attack your allies!"

Yurippe received 100 points of damage!

I raised my head and saw that woman's blade raised high in the air.

This is bad!

So I kicked Yurippe aside (another 100 points of damage!), then quickly retracted my leg.

A thrust.

The blade pierced the tip of my shoe.

Nearly had my toe cut off there.

I abandoned the shoe and leapt backwards.

However, the distance between Yurippe and me had increased further.

The woman stood now in the space between Yurippe and me.

"Over here! Look over here! I'm the one who's got business with you!" I yelled, as I regained my posture.

"What, I'm the leader, the one with business ought to be me!"

"Hey! Can't you see I'm trying to be the bait?"

"Well then don't speak as if you're the leader, can't you talk a bit more pathetically?"

"How am I supposed to do that?"

"For instance, 'Please attack me, I once impulsively spied on you changing your underwear', etc."

"I got it!"

I repeated the sentence I'd just heard again in my heart.

OK, time to say…

"Hey, hurry and come attack me, I once spied on you - you changing your underwear!"

What kind of role have I taken?

However, she turned and faced me.

"OK, <come on>."

"Say something even more vulgar!"

"That angry face of yours is really wonderful… quite great… get even angrier… haha…," I said as I backed up.

"That's right. Come to think of it, how do you bathe in a place like this?"

"Did you wash yourself well? Ah, I think I smell something…. haha…."

"Oh no… we can't have such a perverted member of our group. When we go back, I'm going to have to fire you…."

"And who told me to act this way!?"

Actually, this was having quite an effect. The woman's face brimmed with a killing intent and she had fully locked onto me.

Good. I'll attract her attention and retreat just like this, and this way, Yurippe should come to no harm.

But, what happens after?

That's right… we'll wait for our allies to arrive.

We're not in this as individuals, but as a team.

If this were fiction, at this moment, the perspective would fly out, and describe Ooyama and everyone hurrying over and bringing Noda, equipped with his weapon.

With the five of us, we cannot lose.

The strongest five in this world.

I just need to keep running away until then.

Crash!

…. eh? What just happened?

Though the woman was still standing facing over here, her outstretched blade was dripping with blood.

The right side of my body started to get heavy… what's going on with this feeling?

My right leg started to become drenched in something warm.

The woman turned her back on me.

Hey, wait a sec….

Yurippe's over there….

I need to incite her… need to keep her attack focused on me….

But my brain was starting to get fuzzy. I couldn't think of anything good to say.

Hurry and say something… what should I say….

"It… it's not… over…."

The woman turned back around.

I bent over based on an intuition of mine.

I dodged it. She must have only hit clothing.

Why is my body so heavy though? I felt like my body is about to fall over, but I stood up with all my effort.

Again!

I dodged it. She must have only hit clothing.

She struck again and again at me.

Again and again I dodged.

She must have only hit clothing.

I'm completely fine. Totally fine.

"…. How shallow-minded."

Huh, what's shallow-minded….?

Maybe that's her way of expressing praise?

Or perhaps that's all she can say when faced with a challenging enemy who has decoded out her every attack?

"Don't you know that you don't even look like a human anymore!!?? Hurry and fall down already!!"

What are you talking about, Yurippe?

I'm still OK, right?

Against something like this, you'd better run far away.

I'll keep this bitch occupied.

"Why are you still standing? Your arms are gone, you've only got one leg, even your chin has been cut off!?"

How's that possible….

If someone could still stand like that, doesn't that mean they've become a zombie…..

Don't joke with me…. I've still got a lot of lines to use….

Even in a situation like this, I still want to tell you one thing.

Yurippe, I say!

But the sound didn't come out. Only the sound of a breath leaked out.

Crash!

My skull was ringing.

I can't see from my left eye.

Ah, you finally hit me.

Yurippe, it's all because I wanted to say something to you.

The woman pulled back her blade and aimed for my right eye.

What an incredibly long movement. Where did the speed she had up till now go?

I can definitely dodge this one.

Bring it on.

Look.

Pow, the sound of a blow landing, and the world is enveloped in darkness.

What happened, did I fail to dodge it?

~ ~ ~

Rustle…. rustle…..

My body was being dragged.

Did I fall down?

Hey, what happened?

… is what I wanted to ask, but only the sound of a breath leaked out.

Rustle…. rustle….

Exactly what just happened? Tell me, Yurippe.

Rustle…. Rustle….

I heard the "Hah, hah" sound of desperate gasping.

Is that you dragging me, Yurippe? Hurry and run away by yourself.

I tried to reach out with my hand to touch the body in front of me.

However, I could only move the part up to my elbow. What happened to my arm from the elbow down? Is it paralyzed?

I poked the body with the tip of my elbow.

"What is it….?"

I heard a low voice.

I replied with "Hah-- hah--"

"We're running away… retreating…"

Rustle…. rustle….

"Under cover of darkness… but seeing as we're up against a person of this level, she's probably discovered us by our breaths."

If she's so fast, you should run away alone.

Hah--hah—

"If only… if only I'd known it would be such a disaster…. I wouldn't have brought you along…. I'm such a terrible leader… always thinking myself infallible, thinking that I'm taking care of you guys…. isn't this just like that time….."

Rustle…. rustle….

Hurry and run, she's too dangerous.

Hah-- hah—

"However… I won't let you die…. won't let your corpse be buried here… I must bring you back….."

Run away.

Hah-- hah--

"I must, must…."

Plop.

…..!?

Plop.

Yurippe…. had fallen down.

She must have been stabbed from behind.

"Ooh… waaa….."

I knew that she was very close to me.

I felt her weak and trembling breathing.

Ahh, if only I could speak.

If I could reach out my hand.

And, pat her on the head.

If I could do this, then I could comfort her.

Carrying a useless corpse like me and running away…….

Leaving her back undefended against the enemy.

You'll surely be killed like this.

"Ooh…"

So, don't cry anymore.

Our outstanding Ms. Leader.

~ ~ ~

I'm in a dream.

Why am I sitting on a seesaw in a park?

Sitting across from me, currently halfway in the air is Yurippe.

Between us there's a subtle distance.

I want to reach out for her, but I can't reach.

Well, that's how a seesaw works.

“Hurry and push”, Yurippe says in a tone of voice from the past.

I push off with my legs and rise, while Yurippe drops to the ground.

Now Yurippe's staring at the ground. We've exchanged positions.

“This is how it is, isn't it interesting?” Yurippe asks.

Who are you asking? I'm a high school student, you know.

But she didn't seem to hear my voice.

Creak, thump. Creak, thump.

We continue to ride the seesaw.

“Eh? Me?”

I didn't ask anything.

But, Yurippe continued to speak.

“If everyone's happy then it's good. I don't need anything else. If it's like this then I'm completely satisfied.”

She put on her Yurippe-style smile and laughed.

Ah, I just noticed.

That's what powers her, only this, and entirely this.

That way, if I don't smile…

If being by her side, I still don't smile…

She won't be happy.

I stand on the narrow plank of the seesaw.

Yurippe casually opens her mouth.
I'll go over now.

I'll get over there and smile for you.

The ground disappeared. And the seesaw became the tightrope connecting life to death.

Without a hint of haziness, I walked on it.

Yurippe opened her eyes in amazement and her hand……

~ ~ ~

I was gripping Yurippe's hand. Truly.

"Yurippe…."

And I could speak now.

"You… why?"

"Don't cry, Yurippe. It was a long road. Can't you greet me with a smile?"

"What…. how can I smile in a situation like this…."

"Really? Then I guess I'll laugh alone. Ahaha!"

"You're a moron… but, it's strange…. ahaha…."

She laughed at me.

"You really are an idiot."

"That's why you let me be your ally, right?"

"Perhaps."

I pushed with all four limbs, and tried to stand up.

I was standing.

"What happened to you?"

"I want to move for real now."

"How is it possible… you can move now?"
…. Ah, it's inconceivable.

But, where's the enemy?

As we were surrounded by darkness, it was impossible to see anything.

I concentrated my thought.

I had to figure out her position.

Shoom.

My stomach was stabbed suddenly.

She was right before my eyes.

My heart began to beat violently.

Every nook and cranny of my body felt pain as if I was being torn up.

I reached out for the blade with my hand. I touched it and grabbed it tightly.

In the instant she was pulling out the blade, I aimed directly forward and pushed off hard from the ground.

Don't let go of the blade!

The enemy is straight ahead!

In the world of that instant I accelerated as much as I could.

I accelerated towards that body.

I'll never let go.

I pressed down with the entire weight of my body.

Then I immediately put her in a headlock with my elbows.

My abdomen was sliced open, and the insides splashed out in an exaggerated fashion.

Before I lose consciousness, I must knock her down.

I pressed down with my elbow over the pressure point on her neck with all of my strength.

~ ~ ~

I'm dreaming again.

It's the same park, but this time, there's some giant globe-like framework, whose name I don't know, spinning here.

Yurippe is opposite from that thing. Of course, even if I stretch out my hand, I can't reach her. Well, that's how dreams are.

“Then, let's go”. Saying this, Yurippe jumped up.

It spins and spins.

Yurippe's hair whirls about in the wind. Very beautiful. Of course, given that Yurippe's rather pretty to begin with, her hair is as well.

“It's interesting, isn't it?” Yurippe asks.

"No?", she says to herself.

I hadn't said a word.

Yurippe, why are you always alone?

Seeing her would make anyone feel lonely.

I'll be by your side, smiling.

I grabbed the metal framework and got close to her. Though the centrifugal force was pushing me outwards, I still gripped tightly and approached. Yurippe lazily opened her mouth and watched.

Hurry. Just one more step.

Then I'll be side-by-side with you, and I'll laugh for you…..

The carousel framework broke apart, and we fell slowly forever through the world where the ground had vanished.

~ ~ ~

I opened my eyes.

The sound of voices and conversation drifted to me.

It was Chaa, Ooyama, and Noda.

You finally arrived, you band of jerks; it sure took you long enough.

I sat up. I could move my body.

How long was I unconscious?

The wound on my body was already healed, so it was probably a long time. But that time, it hadn't been that long before I was able to move, right?

What had happened to my body in that instant?

Well, compared to that, there are still many other unanswered questions, right….?

"What's up, did you figure anything out?"

I walked over to Ooyama and them.

"Ah, Hinata-kun, you're awake. Great, is your body feeling all right?"

"Eh, not bad. So, was that woman one of Angel's cohorts?"

"No, it's a pity, but she's just a normal human," Chaa answered without turning towards us.

"Hey, hey, how can she be a normal human with such ridiculous fighting skills?"

"True, that level is really abnormal."

"Where the heck is it …. ?"

I looked around and saw the beam of a flashlight shining ahead.

That woman was tied up with a rope. Her cloak was wide open, and the limbs sticking out were both pale and slim. Could that kind of body perform the kind of attacks we'd witnessed? … If she's really a normal human, what kind of training had she undergone…….

"So, the true boss is still out there. Next time, I'll take him on."

Noda brandished his weapon with one hand.

"Well, wait, don't be so eager to steal the limelight. Before we do that, there're still some questions to be answered. Noda, why did you run? You should've already become one of us, right?"
"I didn't run away."

"Nonsense."

"It's this guy's fault for spouting bullshit."

Noda pointed at the back of Chaa's head with the tip of his weapon.

"He said that Yurippe was his wife."

"Ah. In that case, the protagonist would be him…. I thought this wasn't the place for me, but rather some other place."

"You bastard, you really think this is a game, huh?"

"That's my own business. It's not any less absurd than this place being the afterlife."

"Then, you came back because you thought you were the protagonist again?"

"That's right."

"What are you thinking?"

"Hmmm…. battle."

He began to wave his weapon around again.

"Why?"

I don't understand at all.

"Heh, it's like you aren't interested in girls," Chaa joked. He was talking about me.

What? His objective was Yurippe?

How did Yurippe become this kind of a target?

I'm really lost.

No way, Yurippe, did you actually welcome this?

Well, to be honest, when I first met her, I thought she was a beautiful girl too.

Though, I've already stopped looking at her in this way.

Anyways, why isn't she standing with all of us right now?
"Relax. I have an even better woman."

"That's right. Yurippe isn't anybody's property."

"This isn't a contest!"

The sound of everyone's voices…. echoed off into the distance.

When I came to my senses, I found I had walked off by myself towards Yurippe.

I thought about the seesaw dream. Why did I pull apart that subtle distance?

I thought about the spinning globe carousel dream. Why was I watching other people enjoy themselves alone?

The floor won't disappear anymore.

I quickly got close enough to touch her.

"With weapons… here we could build a weapon factory…."

Talking to yourself about such things.

That kind of stuff doesn't really matter anyways.

I checked my pocket.

No problem.

I pulled it out. It was the pinwheel she'd left with me.

It was still exactly as it was when she'd given it to me.

Ah, so that's how it is.

That's one puzzle solved.

This pinwheel was infused with the wish that I wouldn't die.

In other words, it was a resurrection potion.
Even if the power within was used up, it probably would still function as a toy.

I blew into it with a "Hoooo".

The pinwheel rattled to a start and began to spin.

"Wah, when did you start standing right here!?"

She shone the flashlight over.　It's too bright, don't blind me when I'm standing so close.

"Ah, the pinwheel."

"Yeah, it's the pinwheel.　Hooooo----"

Rattle rattle.

Watching it made me want to laugh.

"What, you're creeping me out.　When you got stabbed were you shocked back into childhood!?"

"You sure are a strange girl."

"What did you say?"

I was talking about my dream.

"You blow it too."

"Why, at a time like this? Compared with that, take a look at this.　There's one of Noda-kun's weapons here too."

"Hurry and blow."

"Huh? Is there something wrong with your brain?"

"No problem, so blow."

"If I blow, that'll be fine?"

"Yep."

Hoooooo---- and the fan blades rattled and spun.
"One more time."

Hooooo----

Her breath brushed my hand, and it tickled.

"What is this? What's the meaning of this?"
"Isn't it interesting?"

"Yeah, sort of."

"Good."

"You're scaring me….."

"So go ahead and enjoy it."

"It's interesting, pweh--!"

"Hey, don't spit on me."

"Didn't you want me to? Pupupu---!"

"Pupupu too, you…"

We took turns blowing the pinwheel.

I was able to laugh by her side.

Able to laugh with her.

Excellent.

At least I was able to accomplish it even in this kind of world.

"Next time, we'll ride the seesaw, hooo---"

"If we defeat god, pupupu---! Wheee!"

"I blew too hard and feel nauseous….."

"Hey, I don't mean to ruin the great atmosphere here…..," said Ooyama's voice from behind us.

"There's no atmosphere at all, what happened?"

Yurippe straightened her posture to be more leader-like as she answered. Say it however you like, but your saliva has made my hand all sticky.

"Noda-kun ran away again."

"Eh!? Why?　I don't understand."

"Sorry, but I've got something even more incomprehensible."

Not good.

"Although Chaa ran after him, right after that, the woman disappeared too."

"Huh….?"

"Ooyama, what were you doing?"

"I was guarding the luggage, if the food was taken, then we'd really be in trouble."

"You really did a great job out there, huh."

"Haha, yeah, I know."

Slap.

Yurippe beat him.

"Hurry and go search."

"Search for who?　Noda-kun?　Chaa?　That woman?　Or god?"

"All of them, ALL OF THEM!!"

Yurippe suddenly started running.

"Forward three steps and back two, that's a song, right?"

"Yeah, it is."

"This really feels like that."

"So it's three of us again?"

"Eh, how did the rest of the lyrics go?"

"Um… Never stop moving forward?"

Ahh… it really is that kind of feeling.

Like a slave laborer.

"Hey, Yurippe ran off."

"Yeah, I know."

Feeling discouraged, I chased after Yurippe.

---- Continued in Chapter 7 ----

TL note: The character 笑 can mean either "smile" or "laugh" in both Chinese and Japanese, so I've sort of haphazardly put one or the other in my translation.

The brackets <> just indicate that the line was spoken in English there.

「Angel Beats!」前日
SSS ついに結成
AngelBeat
Track ZERO
第7話
開戦前夜
麻枝准氏みずからが書き下ろす「死んだ世
戦線」結成秘話、ついに今月でクライマッ
ス。数々の障害を乗り越えて、仲間たちか
まり、ついに戦線が立ち上がる！　TVア
メにそのままつながる前日譚小説最終回!!
Word:麻枝
Illustra
Character Design:Na
第6話 あらすじ

Angel Beats Track Zero Chapter 7: Eve of Battle

Version 1.1, June 18, 2010

Translators Note

Hi all, please email corrections and other comments to irreduciblerepresentation (at gmail). I didn't do much editing, so feel free to suggest better grammar, etc. if you care.

The Chinese translation I translated from is in the zip file in mediafire.com/angelbeatstrackzero,
as will be the most updated version of this file.

*Original TL message: This Chinese translation is by hades9053, all rights reserved, etc. Please include this message with any distribution of this file. In order to avoid conflicts with eventual anime subs, all names have been left in Japanese [TL note: except that they weren't in this one]. The translation is for reference only. First released at "Everyday study garden" Key forum [link here: http://www.reaicomic.com/viewthread.php?tid=6584]
JS download link here `http://www.jsharer.com/blog/339599.htm`

Editors Note

Apologies for the low quality of the images for this chapter, all I had to work with where what appear to be photographs of the magazine which was weighed down with books (the corners of which may occasionally show up in the image). If you have better quality images (or the magazine and a scanner) please e-mail me at Jesse5.1@hotmail.com.

Chapter 7: Eve of Battle

"The fact that that woman has escaped means that a battle is going start again. Therefore… "

Yurippe shined the light at the wall.

"Everybody choose a weapon from inside there."

There were countless weapons placed side-by-side.

It was like a weapon selection screen in an RPG. It also had the feeling of the history of the world's wars or something.

"Because I'm a sage, I'll use this staff."

"How can you take something that looks like a toy? Use this instead. It's a meteor hammer."

It was a weapon consisting of a metal ball with innumerable spikes joined to a handle of linked chain.

"I can't even lift that!"

"Carry it. Bash in that woman's head with this thing."

"That's so violent!!!"

The woman's most menacing skill was her ability to suddenly close the gap with her amazing speed.

I chose a 3 meter long pike.

"A spear, eh. Able to both advance and pin down, definitely a useful choice."

"Well, I haven't got much confidence in my skills with it…. What are you planning to wield?"

"Me? Hmm…"

Yurippe picked up a rather simple Western-style sword.

"Why are you the only one carrying something so normal?"

She then picked up a katana and held it in her other hand.

"Any more comments?"

"Nope."

"Yurippe knows two-sword style fighting?" Ooyama asked.

"I can do it in my mind."

"Well, that's just perfect."

"Whoa, you can use it just from that?"

"OK, let's go. Ooyama, you'll be in charge of the light."

~ ~ ~

Yurippe led us on the road we had taken, and we walked back. Ooyama shined the light forward while following her, while I took up the rear and guarded their backs.

"Listen, from now on our objective is not to defeat that woman, but instead to get to the surface. Don't forget."

"If she doesn't show up, all will be well. Ahh, please don't show up!"

It was like a real dungeon crawl in an RPG.

Whoosh, the sound of a blast of wind.

Clang! Close on its heels was the sound of metal striking metal, and an incredible scene emerged before us.

Yurippe and that woman were engaged in close combat.

"Wah!"

Both were at their limit, pressing their blades against those of her opponent.

This wasn't the time to sit astonished though, this was an opportunity.

I raised my pike and stabbed.

She stepped on the ground lightly and leapt backwards.

The distance between us had suddenly increased, and further, she had melted into the darkness.

What ridiculous leaping ability….

"Ooyama, hurry and search!"

"Mm, yes!"

Ooyama lifted the flashlight over his head and faced the depths. The beam shone up, down, left, and right.

"She's not there…."

Shaaa, a sound from behind us.

No way!

I turned and thrust the pike wildly.

The woman had already vanished into the shadows.

An abnormally tense mood pervaded the atmosphere. My hands on the pike were suddenly dripping with sweat.

The next target was Ooyama.

Like a spectre, she suddenly appeared beneath his arms.

"Head, hit her head!"

"Nn, Yaa!"

Ooyama ferociously swung his meteor hammer, but nailed himself in the back with the spikes.

Yurippe and I intruded between the two of them, and again forced the woman into the shadows.

"Run!"

Yurippe began to run.

Throwing down his weapon, Ooyama ran with only the flashlight in hand.

I brandished the pike backwards threateningly as I ran with them.

Finally, we reached the stair.

I stared into the darkness, while urging them on.

After both of them had safely gotten to the level above, I climbed up in one breath.

"There's no more time to rest."

Yurippe immediately began to run again.

"Ahh!" Ooyama lamented.

The flashlight fell to the ground, and it became dark ahead of us.

Yurippe and I backed up and surrounded him.

"Ooyama, are you all right?"

"My… my wrist…."

"It looks like it got cut off, is your other hand OK? Hurry and pick it up!"

"How did this happen?!"

"If we lose the flashlight, it's all over!!"

I followed precisely the woman's movements with the head of the spear.

Choosing such a long weapon was really a great idea. Now she had no way to close the distance.

Just then, she stopped in her tracks, and flung down her hands.

I heard the sound of the air being sliced.

What did she throw!?

Clang!

A knife spinning in the air followed the sound.

Yurippe deflected it with her two swords.

"…… !?"

An instant of hesitation.

I won't waste this gap.
As Yurippe stepped back, I raised the pike and charged forward.

I reached out my arms. It was just a tiny bit, but I felt that I'd hit flesh with my strike. However, the woman had already disappeared. Her speed made her movements seem like flashes….

"Let's go!"

Yurippe immediately pulled me back.

~ ~ ~

Each time the woman struck from the darkness, Yurippe and I drove her back together. Yurippe's physical abilities were truly amazing. If she hadn't been there, I surely would have been slaughtered easily.

Thanks to Yurippe's deflecting and my spear denying the closer ranges, we were able to remain standing.

We continued to defend the injured Ooyama, and he as well did his utmost to keep the path forward well-lit.

Even ignoring our bodily fatigue, our nerves were also quite strained. I felt myself fading many times.

It felt like we were traveling back a hundred times the distance we had come.

That's how endless it was to us.

~ ~ ~

Suddenly, our eyes were enveloped in a brilliant sheet of light. Ouch, my eyes.

As if in a dream, we'd passed right through the sentry post.

We were now in the middle of the forest.

From the gaps between the trees I saw the sun directly overhead. It was noon. Just how long had we been underground?

All three of us were gasping for breath, but even so, Yurippe and I still gripped our weapons and watched all sides for danger.

Yurippe's uniform had cuts everywhere, but her posture was straight as she led us forward……

"Rush down in one breath!" Yurippe said.

I nodded my head.

We ran swiftly down towards the school. The sights of the past came clearly into view.

~ ~ ~

"Finally….. we made it back alive!"

Right when we were in front of the school, Ooyama collapsed onto the ground.

"How's your wrist?"

"It… seems to have reattached."

He raised one wrist for us to see. The cuff was split and dyed bright red with blood.

"You did great out there… lighting master."

Yurippe seemed to have also reached her physical limit, tossing aside the two busted up swords to the ground as she stood there.

"Well, at least we don't have to be afraid of being trapped in the darkness anymore…"

"……. How shallow-minded."

We were struck by a burst of cold air.

We looked up.

Against the school building, at the top of the stairs, her backlit silhouette was standing.

"Damn, this is really irritating."

Yurippe glared at her.

Do we have to fight again….?

In that case, I must protect her……

Yurippe was already rather bruised……

The woman jumped up, towards the defenseless Yurippe.

How ruthless.

I stared on stupidly….

Clang!

The sound of close combat.

Immediately adjacent to that woman another incredible figure had rolled to the ground.

Between us and that woman…. Angel was standing.

Her arms were equipped with Hand Sonic.

"Hmph… let's go, Hinata-kun, Ooyama-kun."

"….. eh?"

Just then, Yurippe was smiling.

Though bruised and battered, she smiled at us.

Was this also part of her plan…?

As long as we got here, Angel would show up, and as long as we were defenseless, she would protect us……

"Eh, what's going on !?"

"Don't ask questions and hurry up and go. We should take advantage of this opportunity to look for Chaa and Noda."

Soon, we heard the sound of blades striking each other from behind us. Angel and that woman's battle had begun.

~ ~ ~

"I just had a good idea."

Yurippe ran in front of us as she spoke.

Look at all the energy she still has. She must have been faking her previous fatigue to win the sympathies of Angel.

"What is it!?"

"We'll establish a battlefront to take vengeance against god."

"Battlefront!? What's that?"

"Like a combat unit."

"Who'd want to join something like that?"

"You and Ooyama, Chaa and Noda. That's enough for an organization already. No, it'll get bigger too."

If it's Yurippe talking about it, then this will definitely happen. That's what I thought.

Yes. This was Yurippe. If she weren't like this, she wouldn't be Yurippe, and I wouldn't be so deeply and inextricably tied up with her.

Jeez.

"You have no objections, Ooyama-kun?"

"If I don't join, I'll be all by myself, right?"

"Yep."

"Then yes, I'll join."

"One more thing, Ooyama! You don't have to shine the flashlight anymore."

"Uhhh, yeah!!"

Finally noticing, Ooyama tossed the flashlight aside.

~ ~ ~

Noda lay on his stomach on the grass.

After being beaten dizzy by Chaa, he was lifted overhead and tossed to the ground.

"Too weak….."

"No, I think it's this bastard who's too strong, huh?"

Upon re-examination, Chaa's sturdy physique really could be quite a threat.

"Forget him and listen to me, Chaa."

"You look like you've just thought of something interesting."

"That's right. Extremely interesting. We've just founded a group called the Afterlife Battlefront."

Is it really founded already? Also, what's the deal with that name? Please think about it a little more. Put those brain cells to work a bit.

"Eh, what for?"

"Well of course it's to force our vengeance on god, from unreasonable types like us. There's no way we could achieve that alone, after all. Having equally determined allies is a must. So that's why we've formed it."

"Will you let me join?"

"You're already a member. The guy on the ground there is also a member."

"Is that so? Well, get up already."

Noda now faced the sky, after a kick from Chaa. How pitiable.

"Ugh….. Where am I….?" he moaned.

"The Afterlife Battlefront," Yurippe replied, standing directly above him.

"Isn't it over yet….."

"It's just begun."

"What….?"

"The battle of the SSS."

"What is that?"

"An organization rebelling against god. You're already a member. Despite being so weak."

"I'm not weak at all! It's because that bastard's too mean!"

Noda sat up angrily and pointed at Chaa.

To be honest, I could imagine that guy doing whatever it took to win.
Hehehe, as only Chaa laughed. You are the strongest trump card of the SSS. That's for sure.

"Though, why did you run away, Noda-kun?" asked Ooyama, getting back into character.

"This time, it seems like he thought you two were a couple," said Chaa.

Us two? Yurippe and I looked at each other.

"Yes, you two."

"Ahahahahaha!? How's that possible, how could you even begin to think that! I don't get it!"

"Yeah!"

We protested loudly.

"Well, at that time, the chemistry between you two was pretty great, it's only natural people would think that."

"Ooyama, you too? Spouting such crap!? Need me to pour a resurrection potion over your head!? Though without the potion, I'll just use some chicken bone soup from ramen!!"

"No, no, there's no need."

"Anyways, why would you run away because of that?"

"What a stupid question."

"What, tell me exactly what's going on here."

Yurippe wouldn't let Chaa go on this point. But Chaa just laughed.

"OK…."

At some point Noda had posed with his weapon and was standing in the wind.

"I, Noda, shall become your sword."

He was looking off somewhere in the distance as he spoke.

This guy's a total moron….. the thoughts of the three of us at this moment converged.

"By the way, the enemy we're about to fight is the Boss of the underground that you just escaped from."

"……!?"

His face twitched.

"Just as I desired….."

"Bit his tongue."

"Yeah, he bit his tongue."

Just like this, the SSS was formed.

~ ~ ~

Yurippe, Ooyama, Chaa, Noda, and I, the five of us hid in the shadow of the school building.

On the plaza, Angel and the woman crossed their weapons, striking out tones like an avant-garde musical composition.

"What's the deal with that other girl …. she has blades growing from her wrists?"

Noda stared wide-eyed. This must be the first time this guy has seen her.

"It's Angel."

"An angel? How's that possible……"

"In this world, they exist."

With that kind of explanation, nobody could possibly understand, but there was no way Yurippe would get that.

"What level battle is this….?"

She bit her lip and studied the fight before us.

The woman leapt right before Angel's chest, but Angel counterattacked with Hand Sonic. The woman blocked with her sword, but wasn't able to fully absorb the blow and fell back a few steps. The two of them thus advanced and retreated on each other.

"Angel has the advantage in terms of strength, but the woman has better speed. Both sides are overwhelming though, so it's a miracle that they're completely in equilibrium."
"If that's the case, then this will be decided by endurance. It will be up to whoever can no longer stand the war of attrition."

Chaa rubbed his chin. If he grew a long beard there, he would really look like a dignified character.

"However, there's an angel on one side, and the final boss on the other, right? Won't both their endurances be limitless…..?"

Noda's point made a lot of sense.

However, hiding and discussing like this really made us seem pretty organized.

"This fight has already surpassed humankind to an unreachable level….. We have no choice but to observe them like this….."

"That's no good," said our princess crossing her arms.

"When we've recruited her into our ranks, our battlefront will have ascended to its peak."

"That's all well and good, but do you have a plan? Hmm, I guess figuring that out is actually our responsibility."

"No worries, actually, this time, you will be the strike unit."

When was this decided!?

"The staff officer is obviously the leader, which is me. Everyone, prepare to act following my commands."

Yurippe looked around, wearing a self-righteous look on her face, and no one objected.

Why? <Why?>

Am I the only one who has a bad feeling about this?

"Chaa and Noda-kun, you guys assist Angel."

"Can we kill her?"

"No. Though it's needless to say that you'll probably just get in her way."

"Don't underestimate me, Yurippe."

Noda at some point had lifted up his weapon with both hands, posing as if he were a model in the instructions for the halberd.

It was like he was trying to show off…. But in front of him was Yurippe. Exactly what do you see in Yurippe? A woman like her with not even a hint of femininity … ? What kind of charm do you sense from her? Please tell me.

"Oh my, not bad, this imposing manner is what we need. Just keep that up and go with Chaa and Angel to drive that woman against the wall of the school."

"OK, understood."

Chaa took from his shoulders the meteor hammer that Ooyama had dropped. Lifting this thing was no joking matter. That meteor hammer seemed to be currently exuding a wild and violent air, and I felt that it would demanding a blood sacrifice from both friend and foe.

"What about me?"

Trembling as he hid behind those two, Ooyama meekly asked about his mission.

"It will do for Ooyama-kun to stand at a distance from the battlefield and convey signals. When the woman has been driven to the wall of the school, raise your hand. But make sure to keep aligned with the x-coordinate of the woman along the school. You'll be the only point we will be able to see."

"Eh…. Where are you two going?"

"The climax of this tale will end as it begins. Don't you think that's beautiful?"

Yurippe turned and gave me an evil smile that horrified me.

~ ~ ~

We were on the roof.

And as one might have expected, we had jumped the railing.

In my hands I held the two swords that Yurippe had given me.

A light breeze blew. If it doesn't blow harder, how's this annoying bead of sweat on my neck going to dry up?

"This place feels pretty nostalgic…. don't you think?"

"I feel like I've visited this place every once in a while…. and then again."

"When you were trying to fly, eh?"
"You kicked me off! And who would even try such a crazy thing?"

"So spirited! You really are reliable."

"Why don't you try it!?"

"You need a woman to do even something like that for you?"

"This conversation is nuts! Nobody could accomplish that!" I strongly protested.

But Yurippe nonchalantly continued, "Well, for me it's impossible. Up to now, I've never fallen from such a great height before."

"Well, I -"

never have either! The words died in my throat.

I did…..

I fell from here before…..

"- have tried it many times, thanks to you. Aren't I standing right over the final landing site without closing my eyes?"

A monster…..

A spirit appeared……

This must be mind reading….

Just now, the ghost named Yurippe was staring at me….

Otherwise, I could never in my life feel such chill down my spine……

No, that life is already over…..

Well then, I have the same kind of existence……

She's serious, isn't she……?

Don't tell me she planned to do something like this……?

Something involving me having to jump down from here with my eyes wide open?

No way!　She's always charging forward without any subtlety, this must just be a coincidence!
Don't think I'll become some kind of a prop you can use however you like!

I won't put up with that!

"<On your mark…..>"

Yurippe read a terrifying incantation.

"Wait, you….."

Looking into the distance, I could make out Ooyama on the plaza flailing his arms.

"No waiting.　<Go!>"

I got kicked!

I lost my footing, and compelled by gravity, fell from the 15 meter high rooftop towards the ground in a straight line!

I struggled to keep my eyes open.

The landing point drew closer.

There was the back of the woman, who'd by now been driven near the wall.

Until the end, I hadn't loosened my grip on the swords.

Only.

Only to do this.

SLASH----------!

My overwhelming sneak attack ….. had cut the woman in two.

Of course I hadn't escaped injury. My entire body had received a violent attack.

However, I had to declare victory…..

while I still was conscious….
This was the battle this time…..

From the day that we met, this was the very first SSS operation…..

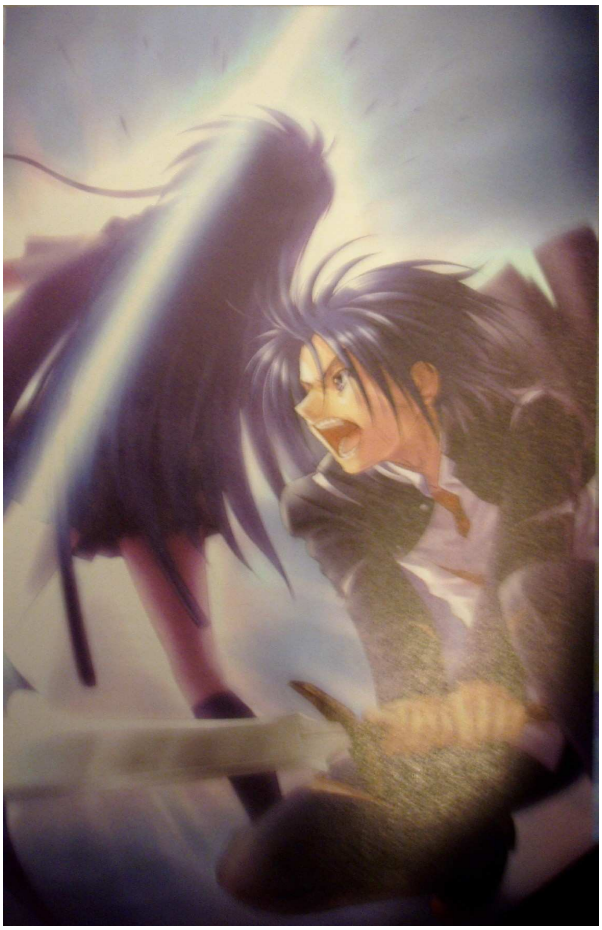
now finished…..

My surroundings wavered. Soon everything started to go dark…..

"Hey, bitch….. it's my….. victory……."

Well done, me.

<Shut down.>



~ ~ ~

"Why were you in a place like that?"

A white ceiling.

The infirmary again…. so I'm here again…. it ends like it started, eh?

There's just one difference. The SSS is now established.

So that's how it is. This is a story about how it came to exist.

My wounds seem to have healed, at least they don't hurt anymore.

I can move. This world is truly amazing.

I sat up and saw the woman wrapped completely in bandages in the bed next to mine, surrounded by Yurippe and the rest of the members of the battlefront.

Angel was nowhere to be seen.

"How did you obtain your current fighting skills?"

"……."

She couldn't move yet probably because her injuries were greater than mine. Despite that, the questions kept flying at her….

"Did she say anything?" I asked the pathetic Ooyama, who looked thin as a film.

"Hey, Hinata-kun, you're awake. Great! That was an amazing strike!"

"Don't make me think of it. From my point of view it was an accident, no, more like an incident. Well, have you found out anything?"

"Well, that she refuses to speak."

"Need me to pry open her lips?" Chaa asked as he watched Yurippe, but Yurippe shook her head.

"Isn't she already near death? Heh, wait this is already the afterlife."

Yurippe regained her composure and faced the woman.

"That's right, I know exactly what you're thinking. So, make taking vengeance against god your objective, and become one of the members of the SSS, and use your strength as much as you like."

How could it be that simple…..

Mmm.

The woman nodded her head!

"Wait, how can we accept a person whose background and identity are still totally unclear to us!?" Noda asked what I was thinking.

"Not to ask about the past. That's one of the rules of our battlefront."

A rather shady organization, then…..

"That's right, I haven't told anyone about my past yet either."

True, Ooyama! Though I'm pretty curious about that woman, I'm also extremely interested in your past too.

"It's enough for us that we have the desire for vengeance against the gods that forced our destinies upon us."

That's true. I haven't told anyone about my past either…..

It wasn't anything too horrible, but still I'd rather keep it sealed.

"Don't get confused about the enemy though! There's only one enemy, the girl with the blades coming from her wrists. The student council president of this afterlife school, Angel."

"……."

Did she hear it? She continued to stare at the ceiling unblinkingly.

"I think…. I'd like to rest a bit…."

Her lips moved weakly, and her voice was raspy.

"Rest? Well, you did get hurt pretty badly. Please take it easy. You're already one of us, so if Angel attacks, we'll protect you."

Hearing this, the woman put on a surprised look.

"….. Why?" she asked.

"Didn't we just say? You're already a battlefront member and a valuable ally."

"Ally…. so this is what an ally means?"

"Oh my, it's like this is your first time."

"Thanks… if you could do that it would help a lot….. I'll rest now……"

"Before that could you please… tell us your name. Ah."

In an instant, she had fallen asleep. We could already hear the sound of her snoring.

"Looks like she's an even more exceptional person than I am," Chaa said casually.

A person even more exceptional than you? Wouldn't that make such a person an astronomically rarity? I can't even imagine it.

However, based on her conversation with Yurippe just now, and the sleeping face she had exposed to us at the moment, for some reason I felt I could trust her.

And not too long ago we had been locked in a desperate struggle….

What's the deal with this calm atmosphere?

I guess Yurippe was able to dispel the murderous intent.

I turned towards Yurippe.

Gee, Yurippe, you really are talented after all. You could even turn such a freakishly strong enemy into an ally just like that?

Plus you have a certain extravagance, making you an incomparable beauty.

No, I don't mean your appearance

Deep within your heart is buried a surprising obsession.

It's the fountainhead of a strength able to make any situation right.

Then, Yurippe. How deep is your hatred for god? How tragic of a life did you lead?

"We must first establish a base."

Crossing her arms, her next ambition had begun to flare.

"Is a dorm room OK?" Ooyama asked.

"It'd be too small, no? From now on, the battlefront will only continue to grow, right? And a cozy place would be better. As leader, I wish to have a comfortable seat where I can carefully draw up battle plans and hand down orders."

"If that's the case, there's only one possibility."

Yurippe nodded her head in agreement with Chaa.

"The principal's office," they said together.

"The principal's office? Then what about the principal?"

Very good, Ooyama. Asking the most obvious question is definitely your job as part of the battlefront.

"Bury him alive, I guess."

"Aiiiii--!"

"We can't sacrifice an innocent person. We'll just give him a seat in the staff office."

"But if we occupy the principal's office, will Angel really let it slide?"

Very good, Ooyama! Now you've hit the nail on the head!

"That's why we'll have to convert the principal's office into a safehouse that Angel will be unable to enter."

"How….?"

"Via a password. Angel won't be able to say it and she'll knock."

"Hmm…. and then?"

"POW----!! Angel will be squished flat!"

"How violent!"

"Well, if we don't do that, maybe at least we could make a trap that would go "Boom!" and send Angel flying."

"You're going to say that building that is my job, aren't you."

Of course it would be. Anything requiring strength must be Chaa's job.

"Nope. I want you to make this."

Yurippe lifted up her right hand, with the finger and thumb pointing out.

"Understood, only I can make that."

"I hope you can prepare a sufficient number so everyone can fight. At close range, it's probably impossible to defeat Angel."

So that's how it will be. This will be a true battlefront. Yurippe has already sent out a challenge to god.

"What? What's going on?"

Only Noda, who had no idea of the circumstances, had been left out.

"Then you'll be in charge of the traps for the principal's office, Noda."

"Me!?"

"Gee, well if it's him, just knocking on the door will take him out, how's that going to work?" said Chaa, pointing to Noda.

"How much more abuse are you going to give me?"

In this cramped room, Noda began swinging his halberd.

"Well well well….."

Pshoop! Ooyama who had gone to break up the fight had his forehead split.

Admist the chaos, Yurippe kept watching me.

My heart beat faster as we made eye contact. I can't say anything like this.

"What are you thinking about? It's not natural for you to be quiet? If you've got something to say hurry and spit it out."
"So is this going to end with something like 'And their battle continued from then on' ? "

"Why does it have to be like the ending of a manga? Everything's just starting, right!? The battle has not even begun yet. OK, you and Ooyama go to the staff office and prepare a seat for the principal!"

"Um… why do we have to go do something incomprehensible like that? We're going to get a bunch of weird looks….."

"The teachers aren't human so what what does it matter?"

"Ah… those guys are NPCs, right?"

"En Pee See?"

"<Non-player character>. Things that don't act according to human thoughts."

"That term's not bad, I guess I'll use it. Then, I hereby issue the following command to the SSS. Without disturbing the NPCs, let's take over the principal's office!"

"That's already contradictory!"

"What?"

"Don't ask while grinning like that, you'll make me challenge that contradiction against my will."

"Good. Then….."

Yurippe took a deep breath.

"Operation, start-----!"

Yurippe's voice resounded in the infirmary.

Ahh.　This must be a dream.

If this is a dream, hurry up and end already!　End quickly please!

I repeated this to myself in my heart.

"What's up, Hinata-kun?"

Although…..

"Nothing, I'm just a little dazed and confused.　It's OK."
This was reality.

The reality of the afterlife.

A reality whether it's contradictory or a wonderful world where everything makes sense.

"Is that so.　Well, good.　Though, how do we prepare a seat for the principal?　I can't even imagine."

The past has passed, and the future is about to begin.

"Don't worry about it, where there's her will, there will be a way.　Leave it to me."

"Ooh~ you seem so reliable."

I will see this battle to the very end.

Though in this world without time, that day may never come…..

In the end, Yurippe, you are our leader.

No matter what kind of impossibilities may occur.

"OK, let's go, Ooyama."

"Yeah!　Though I have no idea what to do!"

---- Continued in the TV anime "Angel Beats!"

I've translated the SSS to Afterlife Battlefront and vice versa a few times.

The brackets <> just indicate that the line was spoken in English there. NPC was obviously given as the English letters too.

It's been fun, everyone. And don't miss the zip file in my mediafire with mp3s of the songs that the chapter titles are named for !

麻枝准×ごとP

「Angel Beats!」前日譚

ガルデモの日常とは!?

Word:麻枝 准(Ke
Illustration:ごと
Character Design:Na-Ga(Ke

Angel Beats!

エンジェル ビーツ

-Track ZERO-

番外編

月曜日の未明

原作・脚本担当である麻枝准氏がみずから
く、TVアニメ『Angel Beats!』前日譚。
回は、増刊用番外編として陽動部隊のバン
メンバー「Girls Dead Monster」の４人
主役のお話です！

Angel Beats Track Zero Extra Chapter 1: Monday Before Sunrise

Translated from Chinese versions done by 林檎ちゃん and 蒼天の龍.

Angel Beats! -Track ZERO-
A prequel novel of the TV animation series “Angel Beats!”, penned by the original creator and script writer Maeda Jun himself. This extra chapter of the novel consists of stories about the four members of the diversionary unit, the rock band called Girls Dead Monster.

Word: Maeda Jun (Key)
Illustration: GotoP
Character Design: Na-Ga (Key)

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Extra Chapter 1: Monday Before Sunrise

Where should I start…

About what? About the members of Girls Dead Monster of course, or Gldemo for short.

By the way, Girls Dead Monster is a rock band, where I, Sekine, play as the bassist.

Moreover, that very name was created by no other than yours truly.

Back when the band first formed, our seniors, Iwasawa and Hisako, were so strict and scary, so I one day jokingly told Irie, our drummer,

“These people are monsters… You leave me here and make your own escape, Miyukichi…”

And from that, the name was born.

~ ~ ~

Okay, allow me to introduce the band members. First up is one of our seniors, Hisako.

Her nickname is Hisako. (Sure didn’t change much~☆)

Hisako is the lead guitarist of our band.

You’d never expect it, but she also has another side to her: an avid gambler.

To be more specific: an avid, cheating gambler.

I actually got a peek of her treacheries at work a while back.

It was quite a spectacle.

That day, I was playing hide-and-seek with Miyukichi and was hiding inside a locker.

The sun was about to set, so I was wondering if I should come out. Then suddenly the lights came on. A bunch of people came in, said, “Let’s do this!”, and then sat down around a table.

There went my chance to leave.

Little did I know, this was going to be my first time seeing Hisako's other side.

The four at the table were Fujimaki, TK, Ooyama, and Hisako.

They started shuffling mahjong tiles on it.

The basic rule of mahjong requires a player to form a hand consisting of an eye of two identical tiles, plus four melds of three-tile combos. The first one to achieve a hand wins, and would then collect points from the other players.

"Calling ready!"

Hisako tossed a thousand point stick onto the table, indicating that she was only a tile away from forming a hand.

"There… Go through!"

"Won by discard. One-shot, all simples no pointer. Oh ho, with the inner dora, that's max points for me."

It was quite a blitzkrieg.

But I had already noticed that Hisako's hand didn't have enough tiles.

There should have been 13 tiles, but she only had ten.

With the other three tiles hidden in her hand, she won by making just three melds instead of four.

"Tsk… Take 'em."

Fujimaki was an idiot so he didn't notice at all. He handed over the point sticks obediently.

Hisako's one-meld-less trickery had wrecked havoc.

She would always make a hand faster than anyone else.

"I call ready. 'Kay, won by discard. All simples no pointer, plus the inner dora. Ah. A max again."

"F*ck me!"

TK was more or less an idiot too, so he didn't notice either.

For the guy to have even used an R-rated word, he must have been really losing it.

“I call ready.”

This time, Ooyama finally drove Hisako into a corner.

It was only the third turn. She couldn’t make it even if she reduced her tiles to just ten.

That was when Hisako decided to do something even more outrageous.

She hid three more tiles into her hand.

Now there were only seven left, and therefore, only two melds.

“Ready here too!”

She tossed out a stick.

But this was obviously too unnatural. She only had half the tiles Ooyama had.

Ooyama probably couldn’t take it anymore and voiced out.

“That’s… 13 tiles you’ve got there?”

“Sure is.”

…Whaaaaaaaa?!

His inner scream was heard even inside the locker. (And what a good spot it was too, complete with a perfect view of the table~☆)

But since no one else said anything, poor Ooyama just got quiet and drew another tile.

“Gimme a win…! Crap! This one’s bad news!”

But he had already called ready, so he had to toss it out.

“Get through!”

“Oh no it won’t,” said Hisako, “Won by discard. Ready hand one-shot, all simples no pointer, all in one suit, two doras, ah, plus the inner dora… How much is that…? A multiplier of 13, huh? An ultimate maxer.”

“Holy shit… That was freaking awesome, Hisako…”

Words of admiration escaped Fujimaki’s mouth.

“Hold, hold on! You call that an all in one suit?! Anyone can do that with only seven tiles!”

“I told you it’s 13. ‘Kay, next round, let’s go-”. She pushed all the tiles to the center to destroy the evidence.

“You are just nasty! Okay fine! I’ll do it too! I call ready!”

Ooyama grabbed three tiles into his palm, and taunted with nine tiles, one meld short of a hand.

“Wait, Ooyama, you little twerp, are those enough tiles?”

Fujimaki spotted it and started counting.

“See, you ain’t got enough! You’re out of winning now, twerp.”

“What the?! Why am I the only one getting called out?!”

He was forced to toss back the tile he drew.

“Won by discard.” Hisako declared.

“Huh? Who won by whose discard?”

“I won by yours.”

Flop. She pushed her tiles open.

The four winds plus the three dragons.

“What the hell is that…?”

“Thirteen wonders, a double ulti-maxer.”

“Thirteen wonders from just seven tiles?! Don’t you see any contradictions?!”

“Hah, all in the same suit too. A triple ulti-maxer.”

“Whaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa?!”

“Whoa… I’ve never seen the thirteen wonders all in the same suit before…”

“Because it’s not freaking possible!”

And thus, Ooyama sunk even deeper in debt…

“Alright, hand over the meal tickets you owe me.”

“Aw, c’mon…”

Ruthless to no ends, haughty beyond measure. Such is our Hisako. A cheat, a pure incarnation of the Devil.

~ ~ ~

Next up is our drummer Irie, nicknamed Miyukichi, who joined the band at the same time I did. If Hisako is the Devil, then Miyukichi is definitely Devil Jr.

With her delicate physique, she often tempts normal students, a.k.a. the NPCs, into doing outrageous things, just to see how far she can push them. A brutal girl she truly is.

“Hey, hey, so you know that guy, uh… Kinoshita, the NPC? He’s like, totally into me! When we were in class, our eyes met and his face got like so red! Oh my god, he’s so obvious!”, she boasted one day.

“So yesterday, I told him that I was into like, the ‘delinquent’ look from the 90s, and then when I saw him this morning he was wearing a pair of baggy pants! I’m totally serious! He was wearing school blazer with the baggy pants on the bottom and everything! Oh my god it was hilarious!”

These NPCs sure were something. Where in the world did he get a pair of baggy pants? Did he make them overnight?

“Then he started yelling, ‘Whatchoo lookin at, fool?’ at other classmates, but of course people were gonna look! Ah ha ha ha! What’s funniest is that he did all of that just to like, get on my good side!”

There she went, speaking like the Devil Jr. she was…

We might be friends, but I felt like I had to say something about it.

“So Shiorin~ What should we make him do next? He’d do like, anything I tell him!”

“Geez, Miyukichi, haven’t you had enough fun? You’ve teased him plenty already.”

I tried to bring out the morals in her. She was once alive, so she must have had them too.

“But aren’t you just a little bit curious about how far they’ll go? We are spies of the Spirit Soldier Squadron after all.”

Since when were you a spy?

Besides, the SSS was a bunch of idiots anyway; they couldn’t possibly have smart members like us.

“What about like, an afro?! If I tell him I’m into guys with afros, he’d so come in tomorrow with an afro! Oh my god, I can’t stop laughing!”

“You should just quit it. Baggy pants are already bad enough. Any more and you might push the poor NPC to its limits.”

“But that’s like, totally the point! I wanna know what their limits are! Okay then, tomorrow, afro, Kinoshita!”

The next day.

“Oh my god, that Kinoshita!”

I was inside an empty classroom, hoping to practice my bass in peace, when Miyukichi came charging in. After she finally managed to hold down her laughter, she said,

“He did it! He really came in with an afro! I’m totally not kidding! Damn, I didn’t even like, know our school’s barbershop had that kind of talent! What a total waste!”

“I saw him too. He was pretty easy to spot. I could tell who it was the moment I saw him in the hallway. The poor guy.”

“So what’s next? He’d seriously do whatever I ask! Oh my god, this is just too funny!”

“Sheesh… What happened to your original goal? Now you’re just doing it for the laughs.”

“Nah, I’m not! This is totally serious business… Heh heh heh heh~”

Hard to believe such an unseemly snicker could come out of that cute lil’ mouth of hers.

“Oh hey, next time, what about like, sticking skewers into his afro?! The cafe’s having a skewer special tonight, so let’s make him come in with like, a bunch of skewers in his afro! Heh heh heh~”

“An afro is still a hairstyle at least, but sticking skewers into an afro? How can you possibly get him to do that?”

“Easy. I’ll just tell him something like, ‘Oh, if only you had skewers in your afro, Kinoshita~ I could just take one down whenever I wanted one~ Ah, I might just get attached to you~’ Heh heh heh~”

What a fiend…

I returned to my solo practice.

The next day.

“Oh my god, oh my god! He really stuck skewers into his afro!”

Tears were coming out of her eyes. She probably laughed all the way here.

“Yeah, I saw. He sure had them.”

“I know, right?! And a friend of his was even like, ‘Gimme one!’, and he was like, ‘No, don’t touch!’ Ah hah hah hah! Oh my god!”

“So, did you eat one?”

“Ew yeah right! They were a day old and all cold! And he probably even like, went to the washroom with them! Gross!”

Oh boy, Miyukichi was really going too far…

This world did turn people into this…

And yet most people still managed to take life seriously and bound together to fight against god.

“Oooh, let’s make him wear a swim ring tomorrow! He isn’t gonna be swimming but he’ll like, walk around with a swim ring! Baggy pants, an afro with skewers sticking out, and a swim ring! Hah hah! That NPC is gonna have more character than us!”

Thwack!

I gave her a good slap on the face.

Miyukichi just looked blankly into space. She was completely shocked.

“NPCs may not have souls like we do, but they are still people! They have feelings too! And on top of that, Kinoshita’s even the innocent type! Unless you tell him to kill himself, he’d probably do anything you say! Yet all you do is take advantage of that to make fun of him! Don’t you have any shame?!”

“B, but… I thought you were having fun too…”

“How could I have fun with these vulgar pranks of yours?! Kinoshita is way more human than you are!”

“You mean… I’m not even as good as an NPC…?”

“Yeah. You go think about that.”

“S, sniffle…”

Miyukichi’s shoulders started to shake…

“Waaaaaaaaaaaaah!”

She ran away with her face in her hands.

Sheesh…

Later, I explained the whole thing to Kinoshita.

Without the NPC part, of course.

“I’m sorry. You did whatever she said all the time, so she kinda got carried away.”

“Then, that means… My love was completely one-sided…”

His head hung down, quite apparently shocked.

“Yeah… I guess it was…”

“I see, but I’m not going to cry over this, because, I’ve found a new love!”

He looked up with new found energy in his eyes.

“Oh? That’s great!”

“You.”

“What?! Me?!”

“Yes, you! You granted salvation to a measly slave like me! I’ve completely fallen in love with you!”

“R, really…”

“Please allow me to go out with you, Miss Sekine!”

“Wait, I’m not sure about this…”

“Do you like afros?! Or regents? Or crew cuts maybe?!”

“No, uh… I’m not into weird stuff like her…”

“Then you’re fine with the way I am?!”

“Uh… Wait… That’s not what I… Um… Bye!”

I quickly dashed out of there.

So anyway, Miyukichi isn’t really evil to the bones, she just has a bad habit of toying with the NPC boys. The evil-doer she is.

~ ~ ~

Last up is Gldemo’s frontman, our senior, Iwasawa.

If Hisako is the proud Devil and Miyukichi is the evil-doer, then Iwasawa would be the music maniac.

I mean she really has absolutely no interest in anything other than music.

And because of that, her cryptic behaviors has often put us all at a loss.

The other day, we were practicing in a spare classroom.

We had just finished the intro, and started into verse A, but Iwasawa wasn't singing.

Everyone stopped.

"What's the matter, Iwasawa?" Hisako asked.

"Doo-loo doo-dwa!" Iwasawa uttered .

We all went, "what?", "huh?" at her mysterious words.

"Sekine."

I was being called.

"Ah, yes!"

"De par' after de intro an' roi' before verse A shud 'av been 'doo-loo doo-dwa'!"

"Ah, ahh, 'doo-loo doo-dwa', right? Okay, got it!"

"Alright, one more time!"

"Okay! One, two!"

Irie started the count at Hisako's signal.

The intro started, and soon we moved into verse A.

"…Naw."

Iwasawa had the mic to her mouth.

Instead of singing, she just murmured into it.

"Naw."

We all stopped playing again.

"Sekine."

My name was again called.

"Yer did, 'doo-loo doo-doo'."

She was speaking to me through the speakers.

“Um, didn’t you tell me to do, ‘doo-loo doo-doo’?”

“Oi sure didn’t! Oi towl yer, ‘doo-loo doo-dwa’!”

“Aren’t those the same?”

“Oi said, ‘dwa’! Not, ‘doo’! ‘Dwa’!”

“That last bit?”

“Roi’!”

Iwasawa had been talking to the mic this whole time. She didn’t look back at me even once.

She was even scarier when I couldn’t see the expression on her face.

“Alright, let’s try this again!”

Hisako tried to cheer me up with her voice.

“Okay! One, two!”

“Naaaaaaaaaw!”

This time she shouted.

We all stopped.

“Sekine.”

My name again.

“Y, yes…”

“Yer did ‘doo-loo doo-doo’ again! Oi jist towl yer ter play, ‘doo-loo doo-dwa’!!”

“But their rhythms are pretty much the same…”

“‘Doo’ an’ ‘dwa’ give oit to’ally differen’ vibes!”

“The difference is so trivial though… With my skill, or rather, with the bass guitar, I probably can’t represent that small difference…”

“Den jist say it oit loud.”

“What?”

“Jist say ‘dwa’ at de end. Waaat do yer tink yer got de mic for?”

“For the chorus part, I thought…”

“Yer canny play it, so jist say it! It’ll ‘elp drive de rhythm!”

“I could… but I don’t think saying ‘dwa’ on the mic will help drive the rhythm…”

“An’, Irie!”

She was shouting at Miyukichi now.

“Y, yes, ma’am…?”

“Bugger aff wi’ de bleedin’ bada boom already!”

She just rendered the whole existence of drums meaningless.

“But that’s what drums do…”

“Make it lighter. Loike new hair after usin’ hair loss tonic.”

“Uh, I’ve never used any hair loss tonics, and what’s that have to do with drumming-”

“Oi mean loike a cymbal roll! Yer’re smart, figure it oit! Yer can ‘andle adult talk, roi?!”

“Oh, a roll… Okay, got it.”

“This is probably gonna be one lame tune…”

A sense of worry surfaced on Hisako’s face.

“Yer too, Hisako, don’t git cocky on me.”

“I’m not getting cocky…”

“Den quit goin’ al’ oit on dat twang in de start! Yer look loike a bleedin’ tool! Loike a rossie who jist figured oit how ter pluk de damn tin’. Ye a child?”

“Then how should I play it?”

“Play de noggin’ par’.”

“Where?”

“De par’ between de tuner an’ de nut! It’s got strings thar, roi’?! Do dat an’ yer git de audience al’ hooked roi’ away! Yer wan’ter grab their hearts from de start, roi’?”

“Are you serious…? Alright, fine… Once again from the start!”

“Okay! One, two!”

“So bleedin’ long-winded! We’ve played together hoy long now? Jist match each other’s breathin’, an’ when she says go, yer go! Yer don’ need a friggin’ count, for Pete’s sakes!”

“Alright, um… Go!”

……

……

……

Tsssssssssssst~

Boing!

Doo-loo doo…

“Dwa~”

“Waaat de ‘ell wus dat?! Waaat ye people doin’?!”

“You told us to do it!” We said in unison.

So, that’s our Iwasawa, the crazy music maniac.

That ends today’s activity diary for Girls Dead Monster, or Gldemo for short. This has been the very first entry, a member intro.

~ ~ ~

“Phew…”

I put down my pen.

“Good work!”

Something immediately presses hard on my shoulders.

“Oh ho~ That’s some interesting stuff.”

That voice… Hisako?

I turn around to find all three of them in my room (Miyukichi is my roommate, so of course she’s here).

My face turns pale in a split second.

“Cheating? When did I ever do anything so lame?”

The edge of her mouth twitches upward. She looks so scary…

“Shiorin, who are you calling an evil-doer that toys with the NPC boys?!”

Even the usually calm and gentle Miyukichi has a vein pulsing on her temple (a sign of rage).

“We made you start an activity diary only because you ruined our live with that prank of yours. It’s just the first day and you’re already writing all this crap! Are you trying to pick a fight or something?”

Those fingers claw harder and harder into my shoulders.

“Ow! That seriously hurts, Hisako!”

“Good. She has my full support for today.”

“What?! Have you forsaken me too, Miyukichi?!”

“I can bear the stuff you wrote about me… But Iwasawa sure got the worst of it… Boy, you really went too far.”

“Oh shoot…”

Shivering in fear, I look together with Hisako toward the entrance, where Iwasawa is standing.

“Huh? What?”

She says blankly.

“Erm, didn’t you read this…?”

“Yeah.”

“Aren’t you angry?”

“Why?”

“Uh, Iwasawa… She made you look like a nutcase. With a fake Irish accent too. She’s totally ruining your image, you know?”

“It’s her diary. She can write whatever she wants in it. But nevermind that… I finished this new song that I wanted Sekine and Irie to listen to. It was late so I figured I’d just come to your room. Now let me get ready so we can get started.”

She puts down the case she’s been carrying, takes out her guitar, and starts playing.

With that, all quarrels dissolve away, and the group is once again united.

…Yup, she is truly one bona fide music maniac.

Angel Beats! -Track ZERO-
A prequel novel of the TV animation series “Angel Beats!”, penned by the original creator and script writer Maeda Jun himself. This extra chapter, like the previous one, is again a rather comical account of Girls Dead Monster’s activities, written from bassist Sekine’s perspective.

Word: Maeda Jun (Key)
Illustration: GotoP
Character Design: Na-Ga (Key)

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You may find English translations of previous materials here:

Chapter 01 • Chapters 02-07&goodies (anon et al.) • Extra chapter 01 • 4-koma manga*

* 4-koma reproduced from SumiSora’s Chinese scanlation.

As before, **Iwasawa’s dialog** is supposed to be read with an **Irish accent**. Here is a guideline that we generally followed when accenting the words, composed by Naru.

Extra Chapter 2 – “Monday Before Sunrise II”

This is a report on Gldemo’s meetings.

“Our concerts are lackin’ de flare dese days,” Iwasawa said one day, backstage (in some empty classroom) after a live concert.

“Really? The fans seemed pretty fired up to me,” Hisako replied, wiping away her sweat.

“Of course dey are! Dat’s cos of all de killer-tunes Oi wrote!” Iwasawa started another one of her music-nut rants, “But ye tink dat’s goin’ te be enoof?! How long do ye tink we can keep goin’ loike dis?! Normally, we’d graduate after three years, but in dis warrld, we’ll alwus be turd years! What? Are we jist gonna keep leechin’ off me lyrical creativity ’til it runs out?! Git off yer lazy arses! Contribute! Don’t jist practice yer own parts an’ push everytin’ else onte me!!”

“Well, do you want me to write lyrics?” Hisako suggested.

“Can ye write killer tunes?”

“Nothing at your level, but still.”

“Oh, so jist some half-arsed tin’ dat’d barely make it te de album!? We don’t need dat crap!”

“I can try my best.”

“What do ye tink Gldemo songs are? If dis warrld had an Oricon, our songs would rank first every toime! Dat’s de koind of songs we do! It’s at a level dat even Akimoto Yasushi’d git jealous over, if we were in de warrld of de livin’.”

Where did she get that kind of confidence…

“Yer songs are, at most, freebies dat’d git tossed inte singles as CD padders. No way in hell dey’d make it te de albums.”

“That’s kind of harsh…”

“Jist forgit it. I’ll handle de song writin’. Killer tunes will keep on comin’, so dontche worry. What ye shud worry ’bout, is findin’ some ways te contribute other dan jist playin’ yer own instruments, alroi!? Irie! Anytin’?!”

“Like maybe drumming in my swimsuit, so all the NPC boys would pay attention to me?”

“Swimsuits!? Naw! A pair of panties is all ye need!”

“Eh? And up top?”

“Use yer hands.”

“Hold on, how is she supposed to drum then?” Hisako calmly raised her objection.

“Drum, den cover, den drum, den cover. Do it fast enoof, and ye can drum an’ still have yer tits properly covered.”

“Yeah right… She can’t do both at the same time. For one thing, her boobs are definitely going to show!”

“Den let dem show!”

What a thing to say!

“But how much good will that do? Sure, it will cause a commotion that day, but if Irie keeps on drumming topless, sooner or later it’s gonna lose its charm,” I said in support of Hisako’s objection.

“True, true. Irie’s tits aren’t all dat.”

“Wha-? Hey… Sure, mine are small, but that’s not necessarily a bad thing… I mean, some people actually go for that, you know…”

“You want to go topless or something?!”

“Anyone got anytin’ else? Oi’ll handle de killer tunes.”

Did she just want to say “killer tune” or something…?

“Hisako, come up wi’ some new stoyle of guitar playin’.”

“What…?”

“Jimi Hendrix played wi’ his teeth. Van Halen had tappin’. Jónsi used a cello bow. Now, if you, de lead guitarist of Gldemo, discovered a new stoyle, dat’d totally take us te new hoights! Ye’d make de fans lose deir moinds an’ rave loike a bunch of headless chickens!”

“I’m pretty sure all the styles that will ever be discovered have already been discovered.”

“Dere must be sometin’. Don’t gie up so quickly… Ah, how about starin’ at it?”

“What?”

“Put yer guitar on de guitar-stan’, fold yer arms, an’ jist gawk at it. See? Sometin’ new!”

“I’m not even playing then!”

“Don’t trap yerself in de mentality dat guitars have te be played! Okay, try it out when we do ‘Crow Song’.”

“Um… So, just leave it on the stand?”

“Yeh, an’ gawk at it.”

“What about my guitar solo?”

“Dat’s yer guitar solo! Everyone’ll be loike, ‘Whoa, what is she doin’?’ and ye’d have deir full attention, see?”

“I’ll bet…”

“But ye’d be jist standin’ dere, wi’ yer arms folded, an’ starin’ at de tin’.”

“And this is where the headless-chicken raving starts…?”

“Naw, de second toime. De first toime dey’ll jist be shocked senseless.”

“Really…?”

“You can have de stoyle, I don’t moind. Tell people ye invented it. It’ll be known as de Hisako Playin’ Style.”

“Without even the playing…”

“Grand, now, bassist Sekine.”

She turned to me.

“Yes?”

“Make dat guitar go boing boing.”

“Boing boing?”

“Loosen up de strings. Two octaves lower. Make dem go boing boing! Ultra bass, ye know!? Come on, it’s not rocket scoience!”

“But then I can’t play any notes…”

“Jist sing dem out!”

“Eh?”

“Whatche tink de chorus mic’s fer?!”

“…Chorus?”

“Yeh, but ye can’t make any notes, roi? So jist go, ‘doo-loo-doo-dong’ te de mic! Not hard!”

“O… kay…”

“Grand, ye all know what te do next loive. Meetin’s over.”

“Let’s git de review meetin’ started. I’m proper pissed, jist so ye know.”

“……”

“First, Irie, why did ye only play de bass drum?”

“I couldn’t hold the sticks! I was trying to cover my breasts!”

“No snares, no fills! Dat totally soked! Oi didn’t ask ye to ruin de show, ye damn exhibitionist!”

“T_T”

“Next, you, Hisako! Why did ye jist stand dere?! Ye were totally puttin’ everyone off!”

“You told me to do that.”

“Who said ye cud jist stand dere?! Ye tink dat’s entertainin’?! Standin’ dere like a piece of furniture? Ye did diddly for de whole ‘Crow Song’!”

“Yeah, like I didn’t know.”

“An’ Sekine!”

“Yes?”

“Yer strings were looser dan a bleedin’ slinky! What de hell’s wrong witcha?!”

“You told me to…”

“An’ what wus dat ye said on stage?”

“Doo-loo-doo-doo…”

“Doo-loo-doo-dong, damn it!”

“Not the same?”

“Now ye listen! De last part, dong! See? Not doo! Dong! Don’t break de flow!”

“I don’t think that’s what was breaking the flow…”

“Now den, based off of dese points, let’s discuss how ye are gonna improve fer next toime.”

…and she went on, completely oblivious to our complaints.

“Can’t we just play normally?”

“No, today’s loive had an impact. De fans’ response was definitely different.”

“Yeah, because we were all so messed up…”

“Naw, sometin’s comin’… Dey knew it. Dat’s why dey were so soilent. Waitin’. Waitin’ te bear witness te de birth of a new Gldemo! An’ we’ve gotta answer deir yearnin’! Dis is our chance… First, Irie!”

“Ye… yes?”

“Play de snare wi’ yer head.”

“Wha- what?!”

“Hey, dat’s loike headbanging at de seem toime! Awesome!”

“No, no, wait… She’s going to pass out half-way through from all the blood going to her head!” said Hisako, once again to the rescue.

“Part of rock!”

“Like hell it is… Irie, are you sure you want to do this?”

“I can’t go against Iwasawa, so I guess I’ll try…”

“Next, Hisako. Ye need a new playin’ stoyle.”

“Make it an actual ‘playing’ style this time. I’m not going to just stare at it again…”

“Hang yer guitar across de guitar stan’-”

“What- Again?!”

“Dis toime ye won’t jist gawk at it. You’ll make it move.”

“How? I get to touch it?”

“Naw! Anyone can play loike dat! Ye’ll use telekinesis!”

“Do I look like a magician to you?!”

“Hisako, ye’re at least a dead person, so own up te dat name an’ do some ghostly, woo-woo stuff. Oh, Oi know! Ye can try sendin’ yer grudgin’ hate waves at de guitar! Make it go gwang gwang from all de agony!”

“But I like my guitar…”

“Sekine, dis toime, keep de flow going, got it?”

“Doo-loo-doo-dong, right…?”

“Grand. Let’s go!”

“Let’s start de review meetin’. I’m proper pissed roi now, jist so ye know.”

“……”

“First, Irie! Why ye stop playin’ half way through?!”

“She passed out… With all that swinging, blood goes to your head and stays there. Do it for too long, and you might end up with some serious problems…”

“What? Why ye lookin’ at me like ye’re blamin’ me fer sometin’?”

“Not ‘like’. I am blaming you.”

“Well, ye guys cudn’t come up wi’ anytin’, so Oi did. Oi mean, dis pains me as much as it pains you! Seriously, ye didn’t notice dat? Ye shud know how much I love ye guys! Come on! How many centuries have we been playin’ togedder?!”

“I wouldn’t count in centuries…”

“Den tink of sometin’ yerself, Irie! An’ Hisako! Dis isn’t de time te be a smartass.”

“I’m not.”

“Yeh, ye were just standin’ dere, lookin’ loike a roi lemon!”

“I was transmitting my hate waves the whole time!”

“Ye weren’t hatin’ it enoof! Bear more grudge against it! Didn’t ye come inte dis warrld cos ye were chopped in half by a guitar?!”

“Like hell I did!”

“In de end ye did nuttin’ fer the whole ‘Crow Song’ jist loike last toime!”

“Yeah, like I didn’t know.”

“Irie, come up wi’ anytin’ yet?”

“Um, how about drumming with my bare hands…?”

“Ye even tryin’?! Gldemo’s already at de headbang-snare-playin’ level, and ye want te drum wi’ yer hands?! Ye tryin’ te bore people te death?!”

“Well, what else am I supposed to do?”

“Oi’ll tell ye what te do. At de climax, take a doive roi inte de drum set. Now dat’s a smashin’ climax!”

“How do I keep the beats going?”

“What do yer tink de bass is fer?! De bass’ll keep de flow going, so don’t worry ’bout it! Jist flip out as much as ye can! Man, it’s goin’ te be such a rush!”

“And after the climax? What do I do during the second verse?”

“Put yer drums back up quickly. Ye got one bar of break dere, so fix dem all up an’ start Melody A loike nuttin’s happened.”

“All… right.”

“What- You’re really going to do that…?” Hisako questioned.

Was that even possible?

“See? Irie’s willin’ te do so much for de team. Hisako, dontche tink ye shud quit dat child-play of yers an’ do sometin’ useful?”

“I don’t like how you’re pressuring me…”

“Sharpen yer pick ’til it’s as sharp as a glass shard. Naw, even better! Use a box-cutter. Use a box-cutter as yer guitar pick.”

“And what’s that supposed to achieve…?”

“When we’re reachin’ de climax, yer neee te start cuttin’ yer strings as if it’s wronged ye or sometin’, an’ dat is gonna git us de rush we need!”

“I can’t play like that!”

“What do yer tink de bass is fer?! De bass’ll keep de flow going, so don’t worry ’bout it! Jist cut de strings!”

“And after the climax? What am I supposed to do during the second verse?”

“Put new strings on quickly. Ye got one bar of break dere, so fix it up an’ start Melody A loike nuttin’s happened.”

“There’s no way I can put on new strings and tune it in just one bar…”

“Try! Quit whinin’ loike a child every time ye meet a challenge!”

“I’m just not childish enough to think it’s possible…”

No doubt Hisako was the mature one here.

“So, Sekine.”

In the end, she turned toward me again.

“While Hisako and Irie are flippin’ out an’ gittin’ de energy goin’, whatche gonna do?”

“Doo-loo-doo-dong… Right?”

“Irie’s flingin’ herself onto her drums, Hisako’s slashin’ all her strings, and all ye’re gonna do’s jist go doo-loo-doo-dong?!”

“What should I say then?”

“Doo-loo-doo-do-be-do-waaa.”

“Doo-loo-doo-do-be-do-wa…”

“Longer! Doo-loo-doo-do-be-do-waaaaaaaaa!”

“Doo-loo-doo-do-be-do-waaaaaaaaa!”

“Dat’s roi! See? Ye can do it if ye try, ye crazy woofer-freak! Hey, de applause is still goin’. Oi guess no matter how much we sok, we’re still Gldemo…”

And when did you think we’d started sucking…

“All roi, ‘Crow Song’ fer de encore! Let’s go!”

“Phew, dat’s over… I’m bleedin’ pissed, jist so ye know. When we got te de climax, none of ye played! Irie’s drums were all over de place, Hisako had a guitar wi’ no strings, an’ all we got fer bass wus Sekine goin’ ‘doo-loo-doo-do-be-do-waaaaa’! What de hell were ye people doin’?!”

“Exactly what you told us to do!” we all said in unison.

Well, that’s what you get with a music-nut like Iwasawa.

This has been the first report on Girls Dead Monster’s meetings.

“Phew…”

I put down my pen.

“Good work.”

In the same moment, someone grabs me hard by the shoulders.

“Oh ho ho. Now that’s some interesting stuff you’ve got there.”

This voice… Hisako?

I turn around to find all three of them here in my room, and my blood instantly goes cold.

“You haven’t forgotten that this is supposed to be your punishment, right? So why did you start writing this nonsense again, huh Sekine?”

She looks seriously menacing, her mouth twitching as she speaks.

“Hey, Shiorin. Just who are you calling a topless drummer?”

Even the gentle Miyukichi has a vein pulsing on her forehead as she smiles.

“You’re only writing this because of all that junk you put in the activity diary, but it’s only the first day, and you’re already making up whatever you want again! Are you trying to pick a fight or something, girl?!”

Those fingers begin to sink deeper and deeper into my shoulders.

“Ow, ow, that seriously hurts, Hisako! And why am I getting this huge sense of déjà vu…?”

“Nope. I don’t remember anything. You have my full support, Hisako.”

“Eh?! You’re turning against me too, Miyukichi?!”

“I can deal with what you wrote about me… but it’s nothing compared to what you wrote about Iwasawa. Man, you’ve really done it now,” says Hisako.

“>_<”

Hisako turns toward the entrance, and I do too, shivering like a leaf.

Standing there, at the center of our attention is Iwasawa.

"Hmm? What?”

It's like she's in another world.

"Um, didn't you just read this thing…?”

"Yeah.”

"Aren't you pissed?”

"About?”

"Um, Iwasawa, Shiorin called you a nut. She even gave you a fake Irish accent, and wrote you off as some weirdo again…”

"It's her report. Just let her report how it all felt to her. Anyways, we're only here in the middle of the night because I want you guys to listen to this new bridge part, so let's get on with it.”

She puts down her case, takes out a guitar, and starts playing.

And just like that, all the tension caused by my report disappears into thin air, and we are once again united.

…Yup, like always, a true music nut.

This is the last of Angel Beats -Track ZERO-.

My thanks goes out to my wonderful **editors**: **e** and **Naru**.